CAROLINA CROSSROADS



Carolina Crossroads Public Engagement and Construction Outreach Plan

Revised January 2026

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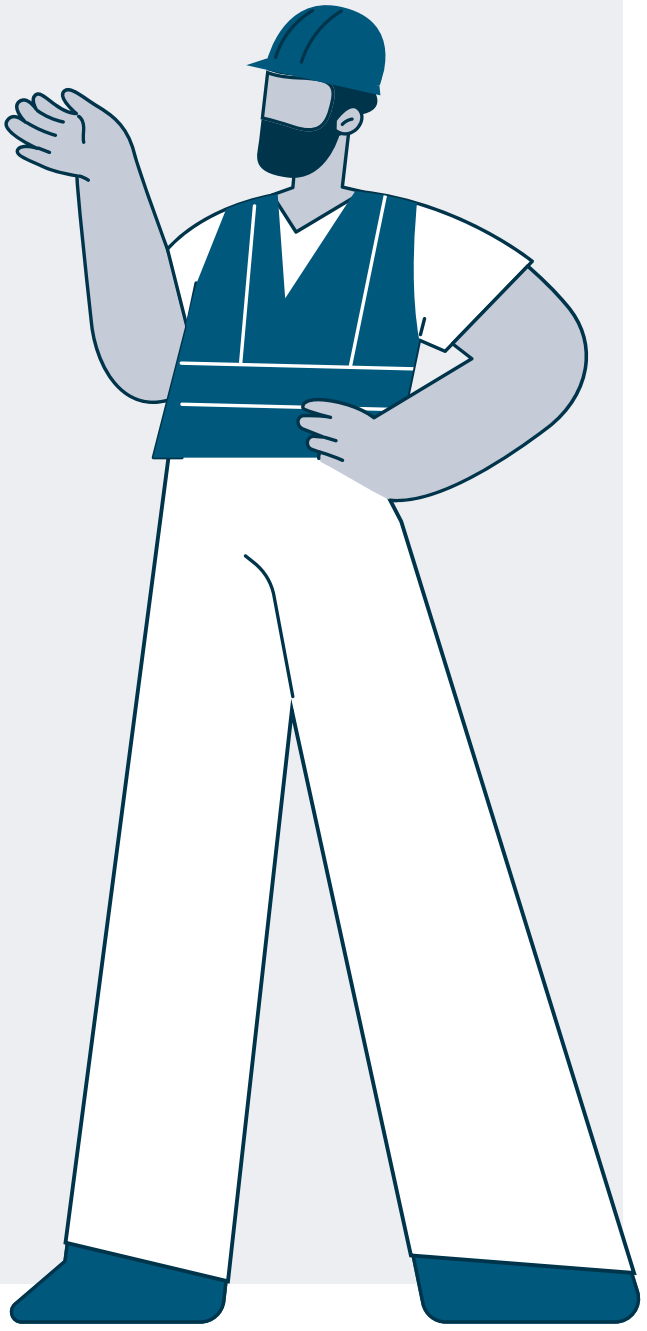


BACKGROUND



The Carolina Crossroads I-20/26/126 Corridor Improvement (the Project) is one of the largest construction ventures in South Carolina and a top interstate priority for the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). When complete, the Project will improve local mobility, improve safety and system linkages in the corridor, reduce traffic congestion, and accommodate future traffic needs.

On May 2, 2019, SCDOT received key federal approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Project. Active construction on Phases 1 and 2 began with a groundbreaking ceremony on November 8, 2021.

In October 2023, SCDOT announced that the Project would be re-phased to improve project delivery and accelerate the widening of I-20 in the Midlands. In February 2024, SCDOT announced that the newly re-phased schedule would advance the interstate widening projects on I-20 and improvements to the I-126 and I-26 interchange, while utility coordination and project development continued in the main interchange area.

The new phasing plan for Carolina Crossroads, divides Phase 3 into subphases—A, B, C, D, and E—and combines Phases 4 and 5. Procurement for Phase 3C began in spring 2024, and the notice to proceed was issued to the contractor in July 2025. Procurement for Phase 3B started in the fall of 2024, with the notice to proceed issued to the contractor in November 2024. Procurement for Phase 3D is set to begin in fall 2025.

The significant changes to the Project phasing have warranted an updated communications plan.



The Project includes:

43 new bridges

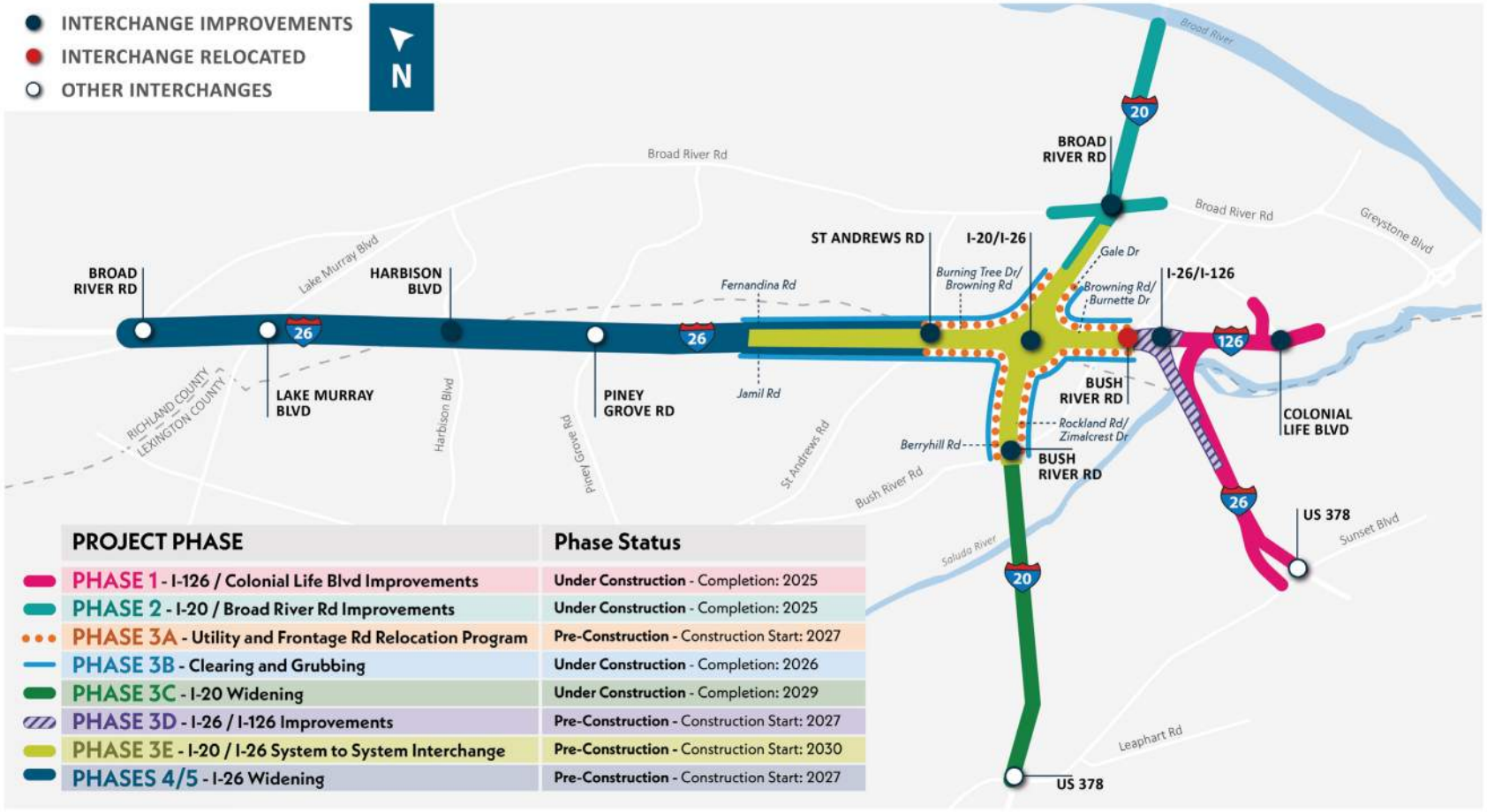
7 interchange reconstructions

14 interstate miles being widened

Program Phasing Plan

12/19/2025 - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

CAROLINA CROSSROADS



PROJECT PHASE	Phase Status
PHASE 1 - I-126 / Colonial Life Blvd Improvements	**Under Construction** - Completion: 2025
PHASE 2 - I-20 / Broad River Rd Improvements	**Under Construction** - Completion: 2025
PHASE 3A - Utility and Frontage Rd Relocation Program	**Pre-Construction** - Construction Start: 2027
PHASE 3B - Clearing and Grubbing	**Under Construction** - Completion: 2026
PHASE 3C - I-20 Widening	**Under Construction** - Completion: 2029
PHASE 3D - I-26 / I-126 Improvements	**Pre-Construction** - Construction Start: 2027
PHASE 3E - I-20 / I-26 System to System Interchange	**Pre-Construction** - Construction Start: 2030
PHASES 4/5 - I-26 Widening	**Pre-Construction** - Construction Start: 2027

12/19/2025

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this Public Engagement and Construction Outreach Plan is to establish a process for providing relevant and timely program, traffic, and construction-related information to the public while efficiently and accurately communicating the project's benefits and impacts.

To fulfill this goal, the public involvement team will execute their roles and responsibilities as outlined below to the best of their ability with the understanding that there may be additional duties as required.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

Develop and employ consistent branding on project communications.	**Employ consistent messaging across media platforms.**	**Provide timely updates to inform the traveling public of construction impacts.**
Develop community outreach materials.	**Log, respond to, and document stakeholder and public comment, contact, and inquiry.**	**Provide timely and appropriate response to crisis situations.**
Work with adjacent SCDOT construction projects to resolve customer inquiries by delivering consistent and accurate messaging.	**Facilitate public relations and information meetings for the project upon SCDOT request.**	**Investigate and resolve concerns and provide direct responses to public comments regarding construction activities within the project limits.**



Team and Responsibilities

The public involvement team will be comprised of representatives from the SCDOT Alternative Delivery team, the SCDOT communications office, the HDR General Engineering Consultant (GEC) public involvement team, the CDM Smith Construction Management/Owner Verification (CMOV/CEI) team, and the contractor public relations teams for each phase of construction.

For each phase of construction, the HDR public involvement team will be responsible for reviewing and revising the Public Engagement and Construction Outreach Plan to identify and update necessary public relations and outreach strategies specific to each phase.

Additionally, each selected contractor team will be required to submit a Community and Public Relations Support Plan. This plan is required to be reviewed by the public involvement core team and approved by SCDOT. A template for this plan can be found in **Appendix A.**

A summary of the public involvement team and corresponding roles and responsibilities is in **Table 1** below. This is a snapshot of responsibilities and not a comprehensive list.

TABLE 1: Public Involvement Team Roles and Responsibilities

	KEY TEAM MEMBERS	KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
SCDOT COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE	- SCDOT Director of Public Engagement - SCDOT Director of Strategic Communications - SCDOT Public Involvement Director - SCDOT Media Relations Manager - SCDOT Public Outreach Manager	- Review and approve public involvement materials to include but is not limited to: content calendars, graphics, meeting displays, presentations, videos, and website updates. - Act as media spokesperson and contact. - Review and submit press release to the media.
SCDOT ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY OFFICE	- Project Director - Director/Assistant Director of ROW for Alternative Delivery - Construction Manager - Design Manager	- Implement, approve, and support communications strategies. - Review and submit press releases and media advisories to SCDOT. - Review and approve responses to public comments, including social media responses. - Review and approve speaker's bureau presentations and information to be provided to local elected officials, city staff, and agency representatives. - Serve as primary speaker's bureau representative.

TABLE 1: Public Involvement Team Roles and Responsibilities

	KEY TEAM MEMBERS	KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
HDR (GEC)	- Project Manager - Deputy Project Manager(s) - Public Involvement Manager - Public Involvement Coordinator - Public Involvement Quality Reviewer - Graphic Design Lead	- Create and distribute project communications templates for contractor and subcontractor teams to utilize for construction alerts, advertisements, and media announcements. - Draft public relations and communications plans. - Develop and execute social media strategy and content calendar. - Prepare presentations for the elected officials, city councils, and other civic organizations. - Review media releases and engage with media to arrange interviews, as requested by SCDOT. - Execute the public relations strategy by developing website content, managing comments, manning the hotline, developing outreach content, and creating all additional program materials as necessary. - Provide content for regular updates to local elected officials, city staff, agency representatives, and legislators. - Provide both project-specific and corridor-wide graphic design/interactive services. - Develop, create, and place paid media in appropriate local newspapers and online outlets as needed. - Manage execution of environmental commitments related to public involvement including Spanish language communications and engagement with underserved communities. - Provide speaker's bureau support as needed.

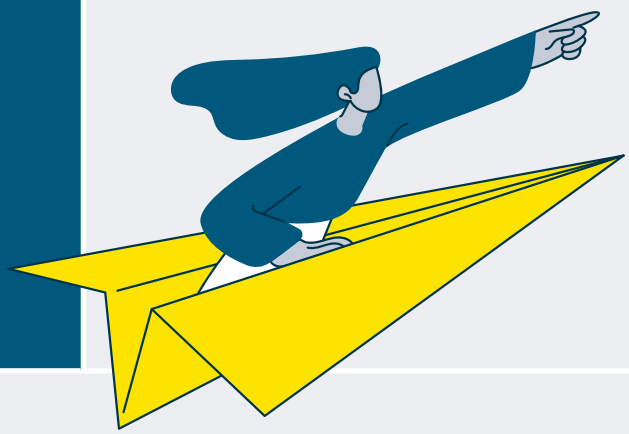


TABLE 1: Public Involvement Team Roles and Responsibilities

	KEY TEAM MEMBERS	KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
CDM SMITH (CEI SERVICES)	- CEI Services Manager - Phase-Specific OV or Resident Construction Engineers - CEI Administrative Coordinator	- Provide construction related information to include on the website, and in social media, press releases, map graphics, etc. - Review information from Contractor PR Teams for accuracy. - Coordinate with Contractor and participate in weekly project update meetings. - Coordinate the quarterly newsletter.
DESA (SUB-CONSULTANT)	- Communications Support - Graphic Design Lead	**Under HDR** - Assist with drafting meeting reports. - Prepare and distribute mailings. - Provide graphic design support and assistance. - Lead DBE meeting planning. - Assist with public meeting planning. - Provide other support as needed by HDR. **Under CDM Smith** - Design and develop the quarterly newsletter.
CONTRACTOR PR TEAMS	- Phase-specific personnel	- Attend, present at, and provide displays for public meetings and events as requested. - Provide activity reports to notify SCDOT of construction activities. - Attend weekly project update meetings with project team. - Provide weekly updates on any engagement with stakeholders to supplement information in the stakeholder database. - Forward project inquiries. - Provide project information for use in direct mailers, flyers, and other promotional materials. - Provide project photos and videos.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CORE TEAM	
TEAM MEMBERS	**TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
- HDR Public Involvement Manager - HDR Public Involvement Coordinator - HDR Public Involvement Quality Reviewer - DESA Communications Support - Phase-specific OV or Resident Construction Engineers - Phase-specific Contractor Communications Staff	Collectively review and QC content and information for SCDOT approval. This may include but is not limited to: - Website updates - Press releases/media content - Maps and graphics - Comment responses



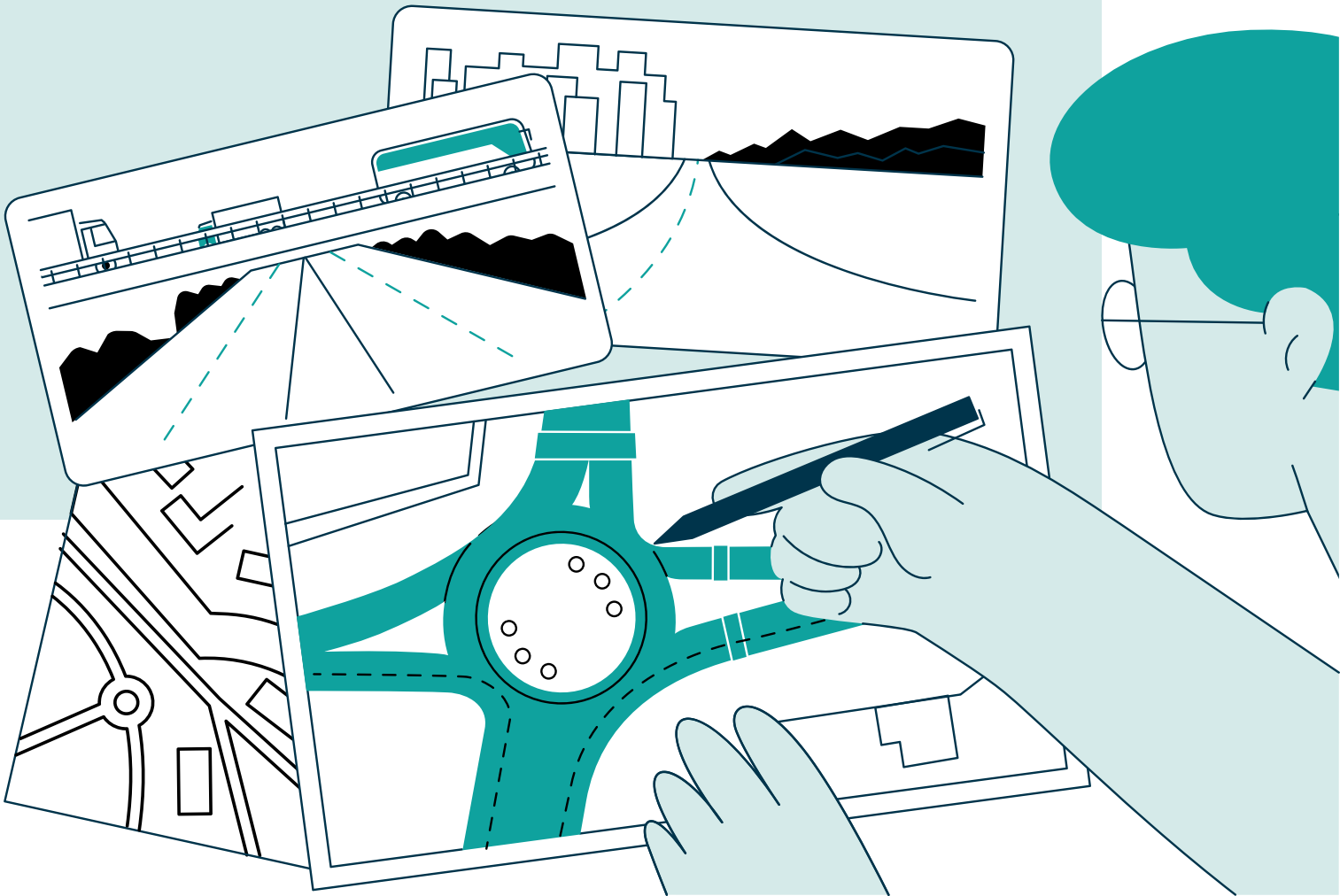
Stakeholder Issue Identification

Table 2 provides an outline of general stakeholder categories and their key issues. A list of project-wide and phase-specific stakeholders is included in **Appendix B.**

TABLE 2: Stakeholder Categories and Issues

TRAVELING PUBLIC	- Timely notification of travel delays, detours, lane closures, etc. due to construction impacts. - Notification of construction impacts when traveling to, from, or through project areas. - Notification of duration of construction impacts. - Notification on how construction impacts will coincide with impacts from adjacent project construction when traveling through the corridor.
ELECTED OFFICIALS	- Awareness of impacts on constituents. - Ability to share positive impact messaging with constituents. - Awareness of the duration of construction impacts. - Accessing information on travel delays, detours, lane closures, etc. - Awareness of how construction impacts will coincide with impacts from adjacent project construction when traveling through the corridor.
SCHOOL OFFICIALS	- Awareness of information on travel delays, detours, lane closures, etc. - Awareness of construction impacts for bus routes and parent drivers in school districts within the project area and construction zone. - General awareness about the project and its impact on communities.
PUBLIC AGENCIES	- Access to information on travel delays, detours, lane closures, etc. - Timely information on project updates throughout construction.
EMERGENCY SERVICES	- Awareness of construction impacts when traveling to, from, or through the project area. - Timely information on travel delays, detours, lane closures, etc. - Duration of construction impacts.

MESSAGING



The following has been developed and approved to serve as the primary messaging for the project.

Project Construction is Underway

Construction on the Carolina Crossroads Project is now in full swing.

As one of the largest construction ventures in South Carolina transportation history, it will reconfigure 14 miles of the I-20/I-26/I-126 corridor and alleviate the most congested portion of the Midlands' interstate system.

At its completion, we will have a redesigned corridor that prioritizes your time and safety and creates enduring change for the Midlands.

With active construction underway, the public will see contractors working throughout the corridor. This may include overnight lane closures for pavement markings, installation of barrier walls, and detours. Please drive cautiously through the project area due to increasing construction traffic and trucks entering and exiting the highway.



Carolina Crossroads Re-Phased Approach

In October of 2023, SCDOT announced that the Carolina Crossroads Project would be restructured to improve project delivery and accelerate the widening of I-20 in the Midlands. In February of 2024, it was announced that the upcoming phases of construction will advance the interstate widening projects on I-20 and the improvements to the I-126 and I-26 interchange, while utility coordination and project development continues in the main interchange area. In the new phasing plan for Carolina Crossroads, Phase 3 has been divided into subphases—A, B, C, D, and E—and Phases 4 and 5 have been combined.

Phase 3B began in early 2025. A contract for Phase 3C was executed in summer 2025.

The momentum on the Carolina Crossroads Project will continue uninterrupted.

ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION PHASE DATES:	
PHASE	**ESTIMATED MAJOR CONSTRUCTION STATUS**
1	Under Construction-Completion: 2025
2	Under Construction-Completion: 2025
3A	Pre-Construction-Construction Start: 2027
3B	Under Construction-Completion: Early 2026
3C	Under Construction-Completion: 2029
3D	Pre-Construction-Construction Start: 2027
3E	Pre-Construction-Construction Start: 2030
4 & 5	Pre-Construction-Construction Start: 2027



Constructing A Safer, More Mobile Columbia

We know that redesigning the corridor is a large and complex undertaking that will cause traffic disruptions in certain areas to finish the project on schedule. We also know the results will be worth it. At the end of the project, we will have reduced congestion, updated infrastructure, improved safety, and accommodated future population growth. We will have created a safer, more mobile Columbia.

The new corridor's innovative design will better value your time and personal safety. Drivers will not spend 112 hours a year sitting in traffic and can instead spend that time with family and loved ones. The Carolina Crossroads Project will bring big changes and will yield big results for our community and our state, now and into the future.

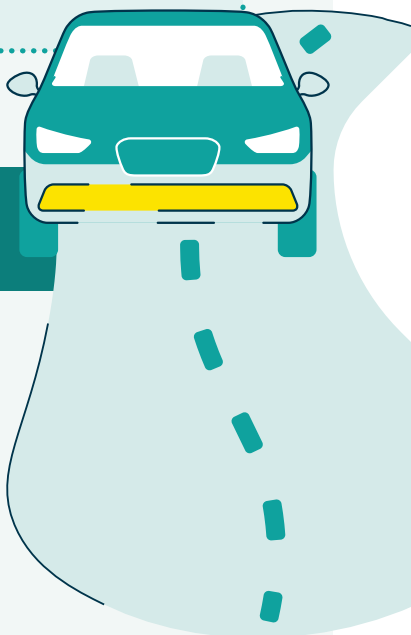
Project Goals

- Reduce congestion
- Improve safety
- Reduce travel delays
- Create jobs
- Improve air quality
- Create new surface street connections
- Enhance access to downtown Columbia
- Improve freeway operations



Project Highlights

1. Relocating the I-26/Bush River Road interchange to a new full access interchange to I-126 at Colonial Life Boulevard.
2. Widening I-26 to accommodate full-with inside shoulder.
3. Interchange improvements to Harbison Boulevard at I-26, Bush River Road at I-20, St. Andrews Road at I-26, and Broad River Road at I-20.
4. Replacing the existing I-20/I-26 loops with a new turbine style interchange. This update will separate exiting traffic from the main interstate.



Project Benefits



IMPROVES SAFETY:

The Carolina Crossroads Project will increase safety for the driving public by eliminating multiple weaving movements at and near the I-20/I-26 interchange and reducing long periods of congestion that lead to higher crash rates.



REDUCES CONGESTION:

The Carolina Crossroads Project will help reduce congestion and help the commuting public save an estimated 112 hours annually that would otherwise be spent sitting in traffic.

MODERNIZES OUTDATED INFRASTRUCTURE:

The I-20/I-26/I-126 corridor is key to state economy and serves as a major hub for commuters, travelers, and commerce. I-26 is a main route in and out of Columbia and a thoroughfare for travelers driving between the coast and mountains for recreation, business, or to transport cargo. The modernized infrastructure:

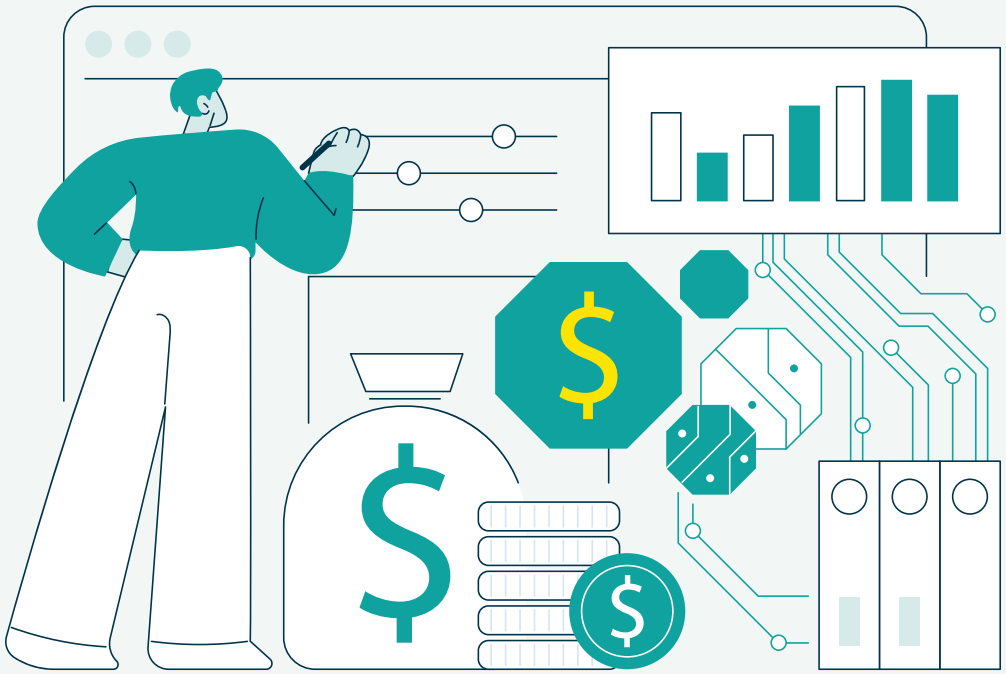
- Replaces cloverleaf loops with a modern interchange to make it easier for drivers to change interstate highways.
- Adds traffic lanes in each direction of I-26 to accommodate more vehicles.
- Creates 12-foot inside shoulders for emergency vehicles.
- Creates longer, separated exits.

ACCOMMODATES GROWTH IN POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT:

The Midlands region's population is projected to grow an average of 70% with a corresponding increase in traffic by 2040. The Carolina Crossroads Project will support the anticipated growth in the area. It will benefit the economy of the region by directly and indirectly creating over 1,300 jobs in the region throughout the duration of construction.

Project Budget and Funding

The Carolina Crossroads Project is a $2.08 billion project. It is a fully funded project that has 90% federal and 10% state funding. The Project is one of the largest construction ventures in South Carolina transportation history, and is part of SCDOT's 10-year plan.



SCDOT's Strategic Plan

The Project is part of SCDOT's Strategic 10-Year Asset Management Plan, that was established in July 2017 when the state gas tax increase was enacted. The plan focuses on:

- Improving the state's roads and bridges.
- Improving the safety of rural roads and resurfacing aging roadways that are used the most.
- Repairing or replacing structurally deficient bridges.
- Improving key portions of our interstates.

Program Standards for Messaging and Formatting

PROJECT NAME:

Carolina Crossroads Project
(The Project)

All three words are capitalized.

PROJECT PHASES

Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3A-E, and Phase 4 and 5

Capitalize "Phase." Use standard numbering.

CONTRACTORS AND CONSTRUCTION

Archer United Joint Venture (AUJV)

United-Blythe Joint Venture

NJR

Use provided capitalization and styles.

Design-Build

Capitalized and hyphenated.

Design-Bid-Build

Capitalized and hyphenated.

ROAD, STREET, BOULEVARD

Spell out completely.

LISTS

Capitalize first word only.

Period only with full sentence.

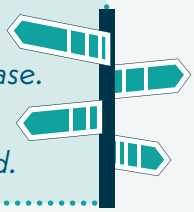
TRAFFIC AND DIRECTION

I-20/I-26/I-126 eastbound (E)

I-20/I-26/I-126 westbound (W)

Directions are one word, lowercase.

Use one letter initial capitalized.



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



Project Contact Information at a Glance

info@carolinacrossroadsscdot.com

scdotcarolinacrossroads.com

1-800-601-8715

@SCDOTCarolinaCrossroads

@SCDOTCarolinaCrossroads

Carolina Crossroads Corridor Improvements Project
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Carolina Crossroads Project, Office of Alternative Delivery
P.O. Box 191
Columbia, SC 29202-0191

Communications Tools and Community Engagement Strategies

Community outreach plays a pivotal role in the Carolina Crossroads Project. By engaging with residents, businesses, and organizations, we not only disseminate crucial information about project timelines, potential disruptions, and safety measures, but also actively listen to feedback and adapt plans accordingly.

As the Project's construction re-phasing plan began to take shape, it became evident that additional strategies needed to be implemented to ensure that every community within the project footprint remains updated on project activity.

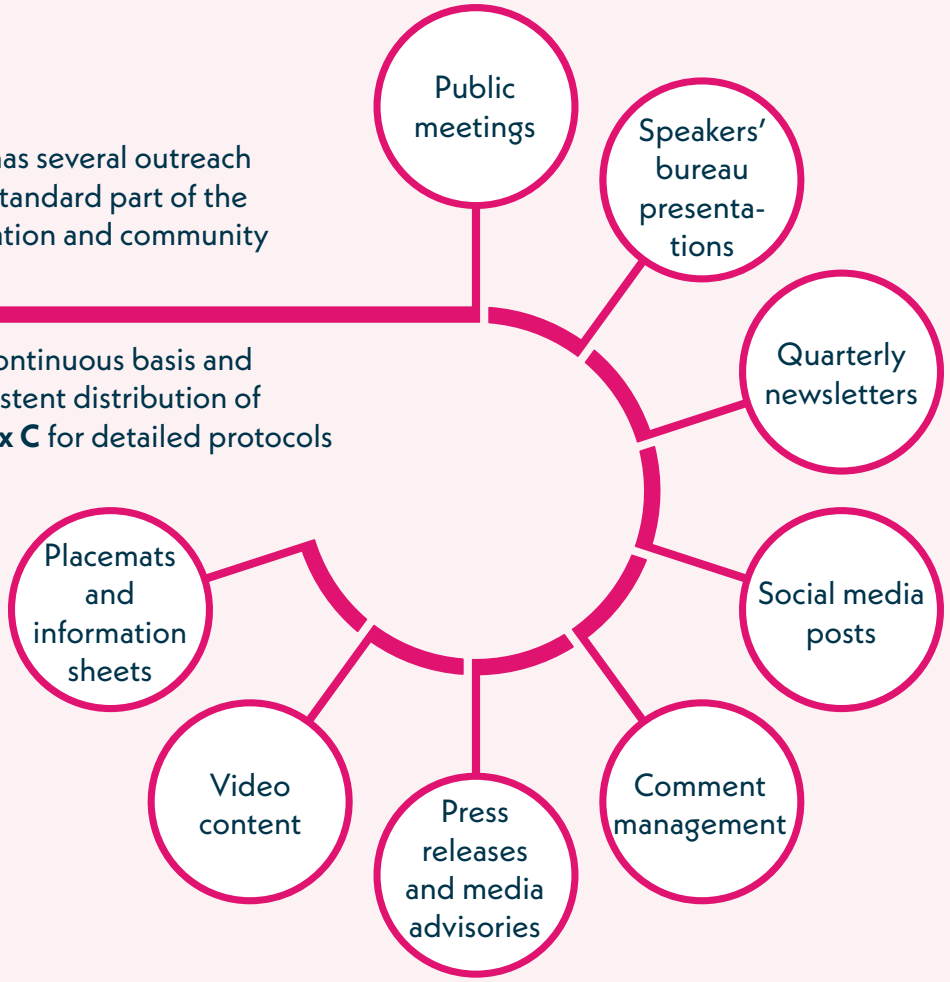
By utilizing additional outreach tools, such as the Equity Atlas Tool and leveraging community events and a grassroots approach to effectively disseminate information, the project can have more meaningful engagement with the public.

This section summarizes the most significant communications tools and community engagement strategies utilized by the public involvement team. A detailed summary of protocols for these tools can be found in Appendix C.

Standard Community Engagement Tools

The public involvement team has several outreach tools and strategies that are a standard part of the team's approach to communication and community engagement.

These are implemented on a continuous basis and create the foundation for consistent distribution of project updates. See **Appendix C** for detailed protocols of these tools.



Strategic Community Engagement Strategies and Tools

In addition to the standard outreach tools, there are several strategies and tools that the project team can implement to ensure that project information is reaching communities throughout the project footprint and that diverse demographics are engaged with project activity.

These strategies elevate the public involvement team's approach to equitable engagement by striving to overcome common barriers to participation. These barriers tend to limit engagement with often marginalized and overlooked audiences.

We can amplify our efforts and tailor outreach strategies to specific community needs by applying a multi-faceted approach that includes building relationships with community leaders and organizations. Our overall goal is to be intentional in our use of proactive and transparent engagement to build trust, minimize disruptions, and ultimately create a highway infrastructure that meets the needs of the community and the project goals.

STRATEGY: Leveraging Community Events

Instead of asking people to take time out of their schedules to attend a meeting at a designated place and time, this approach gives the Project a presence at strategically selected events and allows the project team to engage large groups of people on their terms.

For these events, we will set up an information table for the duration of the scheduled event time and staff the table with members of the project team who would be assigned a specific shift.

Social media posts will announce plans to have the project represented at the event and encourage members of the community to stop by and learn about project updates.

RECOMMENDED EVENTS:

- Lexington County Peach Festival *(Mid to late summer)*
- Jubilee Festival *(Late summer or early fall)*
- Irmo Okra Strut *(Late summer or early fall)*
- Soda City *(Every Saturday)*

Attending existing community based events provides the opportunity to give quarterly community updates while reducing some of that obstacles that traditionally limit attendance at public meetings.

STRATEGY: Meetings on the Move

This strategy brings traditional open house meetings to various locations throughout the project footprint and explores the idea of holding meetings on a Saturday morning, instead of a weeknight. As with the others, this approach meets the goal of providing the public with quarterly updates while making participation more convenient and accessible.

For these events, we would identify more traditional meeting locations such as community centers or event halls and replicate the meeting plan utilized for the April 9, 2024, meeting at Dutch Square Center.



STRATEGY: Community Partnerships (Business Outreach)

Business owners are a key stakeholder group for the project. It is vital the public involvement team keeps this group abreast of project information and communicate construction activity that may impact their establishments.

To initiate this process, the Equity Atlas tool will be used to identify businesses within the project area. Initial contact will be made via postal service, inviting them to attend an information session tailored specifically to their needs.

Following the information session, interested businesses will be invited to join a dedicated email list exclusively designed to deliver pertinent project updates. These email communications will be sent on an as-needed basis, ensuring timely dissemination of relevant information to business owners.

Unlike our public communications, these emails will be curated to address topics relevant to business owners, ensuring they receive valuable insights and actionable information.

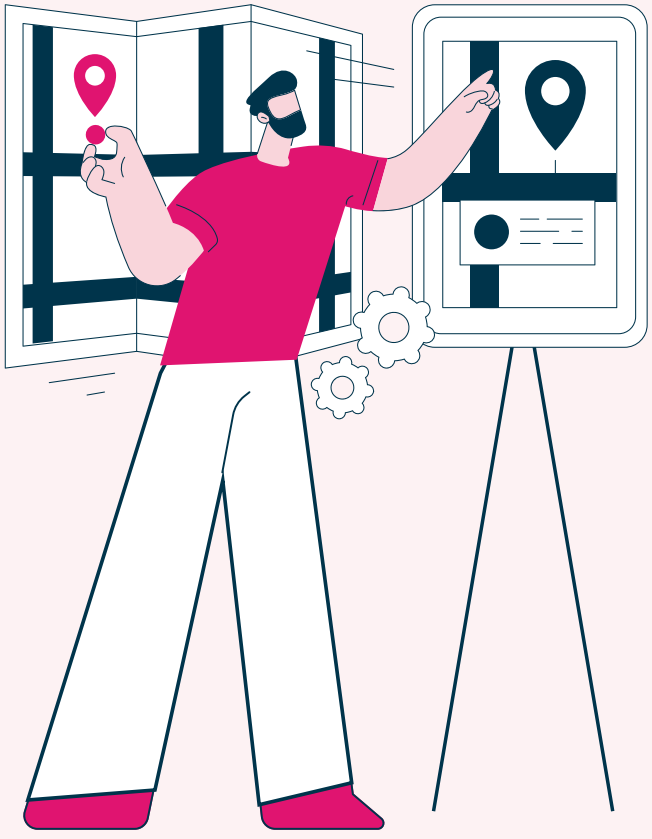
TOPICS FOR BUSINESS OUTREACH

- Project Timeline: *Updates on progress and any changes affecting local businesses.*
- Road Closures and Detours: *Info on upcoming closures, detours, and alternate routes to manage traffic disruptions.*
- Construction Milestones: *Highlights of completed and upcoming activities.*
- Traffic Impacts: *Details on expected traffic changes, including peak construction times and areas to avoid.*
- Parking and Access: *Updates on parking availability and access changes, with alternative arrangements if needed.*
- Community Events: *Notifications of relevant meetings for businesses to address concerns.*
- Safety Reminders: *Important safety precautions for workers and pedestrians.*
- Right of Way Topics:
  - *Explanation and education*
  - *Acquisition updates*
  - *Impact on businesses*
  - *Timeline for activities*
  - *Communication channels*



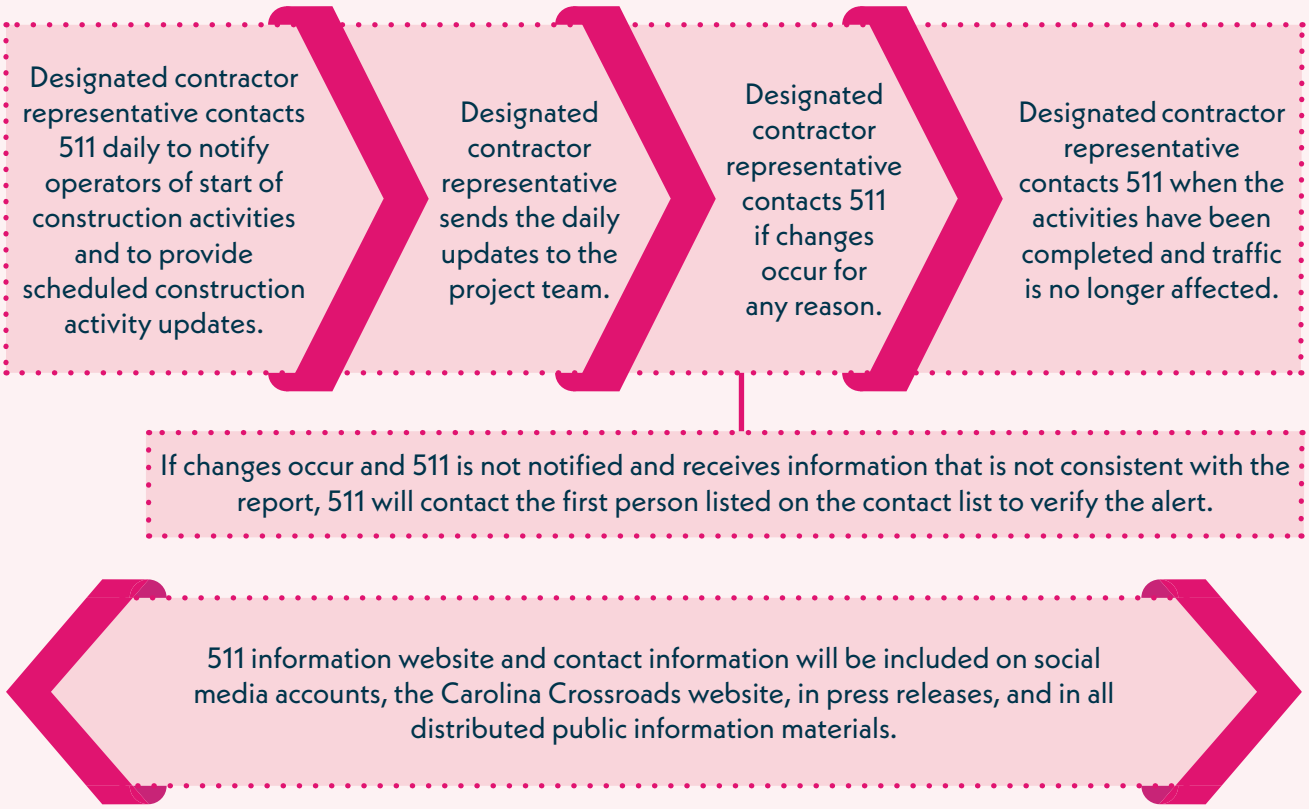
ADDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

STRATEGIES	TOOLS
- Pop-up events (Malls, parks, libraries, etc.) - Bus route/stop information displays - Small business events and job fairs - Area specific outreach to include landing pages, videos and 1:1/ small group engagement (McSwain Drive, Jamil Road, etc.)	- Navigation App ads (Waze/Apple Maps) - Paid posts on social media - Text messaging campaigns



511 Traffic Alerts

The contractor public relations team will provide a Team Contact List to the SCDOT assistant traffic management engineer. A designated contractor representative will be responsible for contacting 511 to inform the operators of construction activities scheduled each day. The process will be as follows:



Public Relations and Media Engagement

PRESS RELEASES AND MEDIA ADVISORIES

Press releases and media advisory distribution is a standard outreach tool. The contractor project team is responsible for developing initial drafts of press releases related to construction updates. All other press releases are developed by the public involvement team. SCDOT's communications office is responsible for final approval and distribution. A formal outline of press release distribution protocols can be found in **Appendix C.**

SCDOT STAFF ARE THE ONLY AUTHORIZED SPOKESPERSONS FOR THE CAROLINA CROSSROADS PROJECT

Traffic Incident and Crisis Communications

In the case of a major incident within the project footprint or due to construction activity, Traffic Incident and Crisis Communications Plan (TICCP) will be implemented immediately.

The TICCP is designed to ensure that all communication efforts related to crisis situations or incidents are managed through SCDOT. The TICCP focuses primarily on addressing immediate and short-term incidents that affect the public and have the potential to attract media attention.

Although there are a limitless number of situations that could arise, some possible crisis situations could include:

- Construction zone incidents with or without injuries and fatalities.
- Environmental concerns.
- Damages to property near worksites.
- Public complaints regarding construction impact to business.
- Complaints about scheduled or spontaneous closures extending into rush hour.

Some issues may take several months to come to resolution. The crisis process and steps outlined in this plan may need to be adjusted to account for the longevity of the issue and the importance of informing critical team members. The level of media attention may also dictate how the issue response process unfolds. The full protocols for the TICCP can be found in **Appendix C.**

Media Policy

News media may arrive on scene or contact SCDOT to obtain information and details for reporting. It is important that initial information about the situation is conveyed in a timely and accurate manner.

This efficiency can help to control the message the media shares with the public. SCDOT staff will be responsible for coordinating media requests, scheduling interviews, prepping the assigned spokesperson, and answering basic questions.

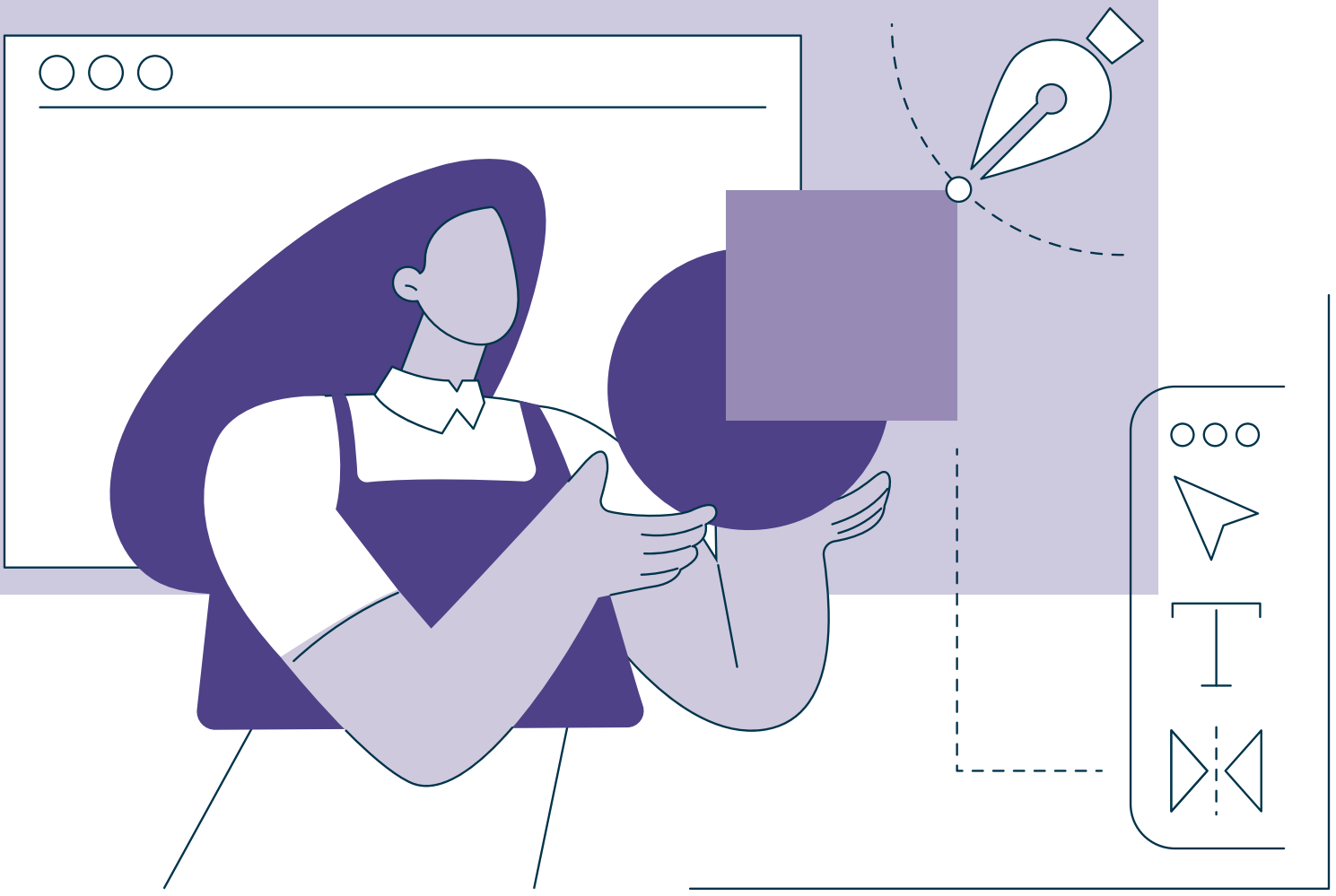
SCDOT staff are the only authorized spokespersons for the Carolina Crossroads Project. Executive SCDOT management may be required to be media points of contact depending on the severity of the crisis.

HDR, CDM Smith, and contractor teams personnel are expected to assist and support as directed by SCDOT. Individuals from these teams should not speak to the media on behalf of the project unless explicitly directed to do so by SCDOT.

Committing to this policy will help ensure that the message being communicated is consistent. Additional protocols for traffic incidents or crisis situations can be found in the TICCP in **Appendix C.**



BRAND REFRESH



The Project's re-phasing presented an opportunity to refresh and refine its visual identity. The updated branding reinforces a sense of calm, confidence, and vitality.

The color palette was expanded to support additional project phase delineation and incorporate pastel midtones to evoke positive feelings like optimism and joy. They are associated with freshness and growth.

The project's visual language was also reimagined. It now includes illustrated people who can help humanize the project and represent the diversity of the community we serve and illustrated representations of construction activity.

Color Palette

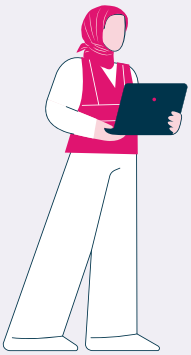
Primary Palette	Tint Palette	Shape Color Application	Bold & White Text on Primary	Colored Text on Tints	Colored Text on White	Primary Colors Shades for Text	Accent Color
#E01570	#F9D5DB	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-
#10A29E	#D5EAE9	★	Aa	Aa ★	Aa ★	#0E7E7B ★	-
#ED701D	#FBDFC8	★	Aa	Aa ★	Aa ★	#C15710 ★	-
#199AD2	#D5E5F6	★	Aa	Aa ★	Aa ★	#147CA9 ★	-
#148140	#C6D5C3	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-
#4E4187	#CEC9DD	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-
#00587D	#C5CBD7	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-
#959924	#E4E4AA	★	Aa	Aa ★	Aa ★	#75781C ★	#C3C92F ◆
#00344B	#BABDC6	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-
#FCE300	#FEF6CC	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-
#55565B	#CECCCD	★	Aa	Aa	Aa	-	-

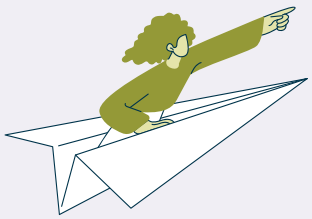
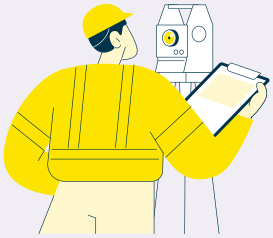
★ Text uses the darker shade only

◆ Color reserved for maps and visual highlights only

Iconography and Illustrations



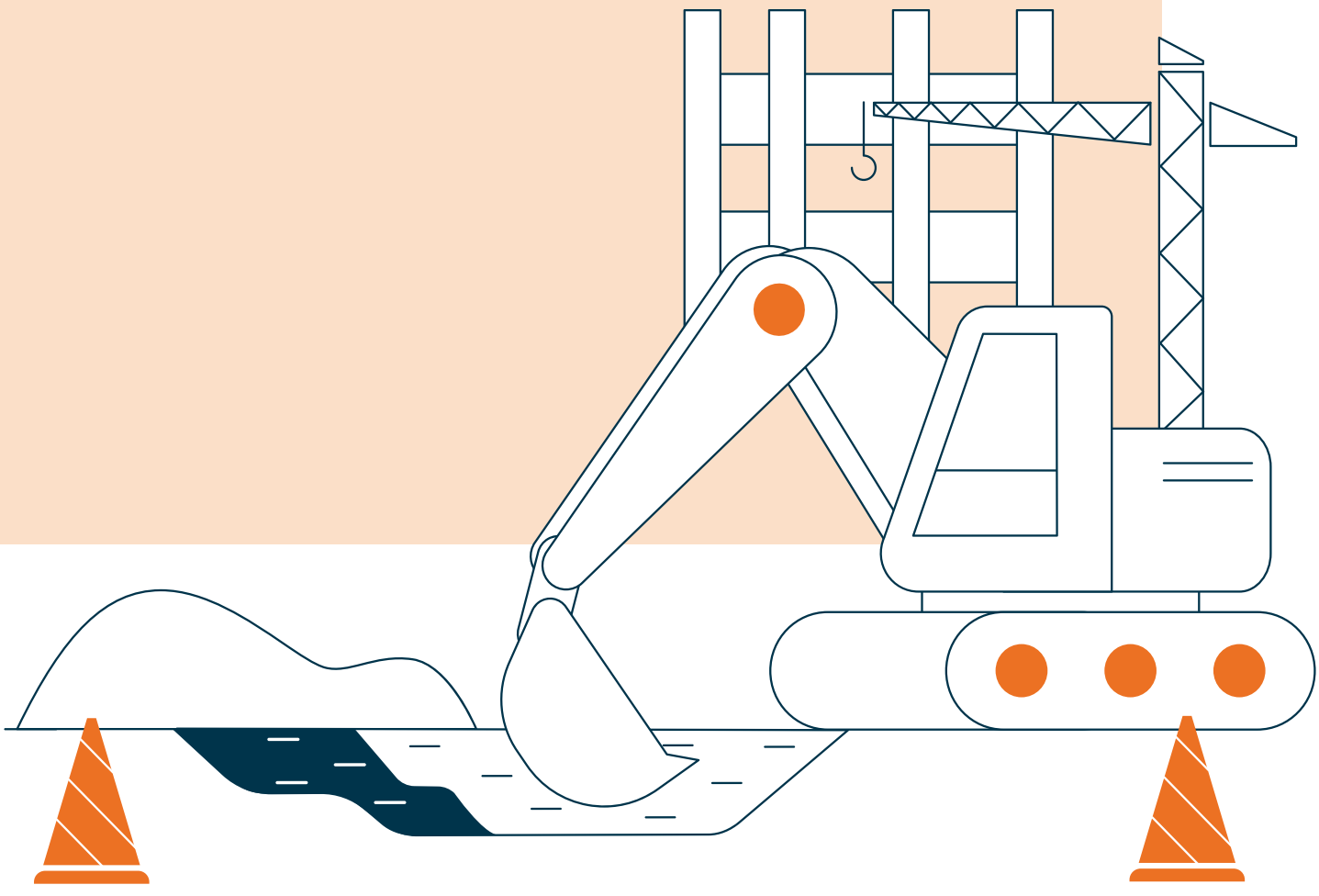






SUNNY
Sunny was introduced to serve as an animated spokesperson for the project. Sunny will serve as the narrator for project videos and be periodically featured on social media content and other project material.

APPENDICES



Appendix A - Community and Public Relations Support Plan Template

This outline identifies the required sections of the Community and Public Relations Support Plan that contractors are expected to provide as specified during the RFP process.

General - A summary of contractor's project phase including a summary of the phase area, a summary of the proposed design solution, contracted milestones, estimated timelines, and a summary of the benefit to the public.

Public Information Team - The contractor's public involvement team members and any sub-contractors who will serve on the public involvement team for each phase of construction.

Information Sharing Protocols - The contractor team's protocols and processes sharing construction updates to the public involvement team to distribute on official project social media platforms, the project website, and for press releases.

Public Engagement Support Protocols - The contractor's process for providing personnel to support public involvement meetings, pop-up events, and other public engagement activities as needed.

Project Protocols Acknowledgements - The contractor's compliance with the project's public involvement protocols as identified in **Appendix C.**



Appendix B - Project Stakeholders

U.S. SENATORS

CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

- Congress Member (District 2)
- Congress Member (District 6)

STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Secretary of State
- Attorney General
- State Treasurer
- Comptroller General
- Superintendent of Education
- Commissioner of Agriculture
- Adjutant General Major

SC SENATE

- Lexington, Newberry, & Richland (District 18)
- Richland (District 19)
- Lexington & Richland (District 20)
- Richland (District 21)
- Kershaw & Richland (District 22)
- Lexington (District 23)
- Aiken, Edgefield, Lexington, McCormick, & Saluda (District 25)
- Lexington (District 26)

SC HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- Lexington (District 69)
- Richland (District 70)
- Lexington & Richland (District 71)
- Richland (District 72)
- Richland (District 73)
- Richland (District 74)
- Richland (District 75)
- Richland (District 76)
- Richland (District 77)
- Richland (District 78)
- Richland (District 79)
- Richland (District 80)
- Lexington (District 85)
- Lexington (District 87)
- Lexington (District 88)
- Lexington (District 89)

LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCIES

- City of Columbia
- Richland County
- Lexington County
- Town of Irmo
- City of West Columbia
- Town of Chapin
- Town of Lexington
- Central Midlands Council of Government

COLUMBIA ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Mayor
- Council Members

RICHLAND COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Council Member (District 1)
- Council Member (District 2)
- Council Member (District 3)
- Council Member (District 4)
- Council Member (District 5)
- Council Member (District 6)
- Council Member (District 7)
- Council Member (District 8)
- Council Member (District 9)
- Council Member (District 10)
- Council Member (District 11)

TOWN OF IRMO ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Mayor
- Mayor Pro-Tem
- Council Members

CITY OF WEST COLUMBIA ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Mayor
- Council Member (District 1)
- Council Member (District 2)
- Council Member (District 3)
- Council Member (District 4)
- Council Member (District 5)
- Mayor Pro-Tem (District 6)
- Council Member (District 7)
- Council Member (District 8)

TOWN OF CHAPIN ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Mayor
- Mayor Pro-Tem
- Council Members

TOWN OF LEXINGTON ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Mayor
- Mayor Pro-Tem
- Council Members

LEXINGTON COUNTY COUNCIL

- Council Member (District 1)
- Council Member (District 2)
- Council Member (District 3)
- Council Member (District 4)
- Council Member (District 5)

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY GROUPS

- Transportation Association of South Carolina
- Palmetto Cycling Coalition
- Carolina Wildlife Care
- Columbia Audubon Society
- Congaree Riverkeeper
- Keep the Midlands Beautiful
- Richland County Conservation Commission
- Sierra Club, South Carolina Chapter
- South Carolina Wildlife Federation
- Ducks Unlimited
- South Carolina Alliance to Fix Our Roads (SCFOR)
- West Columbia Beautification Foundation
- Harbison State Forest

DISABLED POPULATION OUTREACH GROUPS

- Experience Works
- South Carolina Commission for the Blind

HISPANIC OUTREACH GROUPS

- Hispanic Connections, Inc.
- Hispanic Leadership Council
- South Carolina Hispanic Outreach

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- Columbia Chamber of Commerce
- Lexington Chamber of Commerce
- South Carolina Chamber of Commerce
- North Columbia Business Association
- Five Points Association
- Central Carolina Economic Development Association
- Greater Chapin Chamber of Commerce
- Development/Property Management Entities

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports, & Tourism
- South Carolina Trucking Association
- New Carolina: South Carolina's Council on Competitiveness
- South Carolina Economic Developers' Association (SCEDA)
- Lexington County Economic Development Department
- West Columbia Chamber of Commerce
- Columbia Metro Convention/ Visitor Bureau
- Greater Columbia Civil War Alliance
- Greater Irmo Chamber of Commerce
- Lexington County Recreating & Aging Commission
- Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Gardens
- Corporation for Economic Opportunity
- Columbia Mall area

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

- Central Carolina Community Foundation
- Chapin We Care Center
- Columbia YMCA
- Columbia Urban League
- Kiwanis Carolina
- Lions Club
- Knights of Columbus
- Affordable Housing Coalition of South Carolina
- Richland Sertoma Club
- Irmo Library
- Saint Andrews Regional Library
- First Church of Nazarene
- Ashland United Methodist Church
- Friendship AME Church
- New Spring Church: Columbia Campus
- Broad River Church
- Abundant Life Outreach Ministry
- St. Andrews Evangelical Church
- Church-Christ North Columbia
- Christian Life Church
- Able South Carolina
- River Alliance
- Rotary Club
- Palmetto Health Hospital
- South Carolina Sheriff's Association
- League of Women Voters

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES

- St. Andrews Middle School
- Remington College – Columbia Campus
- ITT Technical Institute – Columbia Campus
- ECPI University
- Strayer University Columbia Campus
- Sandel Elementary School
- Seven Oaks Elementary School
- Leaphart Elementary School
- Dutch Fork Elementary School
- Dutch Fork Middle School
- Dutch Fork High School
- Harbison West Elementary School
- Irmo High School
- Columbia High School
- Crossroads Middle School
- Irmo Middle School
- Irmo Elementary School
- University of South Carolina

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

- Arsenal Hill Neighborhood Organization
- Barhamville Estates Neighborhood Organization
- Belvedere Community Organization
- Bethel-Bishop-Chappell Organization
- Booker Washington Heights Organization
- Celia Saxon Neighborhood
- Community Improvement Cooperative Council
- Coalition of Downtown Neighborhoods
- Colonial Heights Neighborhood Organization
- Colonial Park Neighborhood Organization
- Colonial West Neighborhood Organization
- Colony Community Organization
- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Edgewood Neighborhood Floral Club
- Eva P. Trezevant Neighborhood Organization

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

- Granby Hill Alliance
- Highland Park Civic Club
- Historic Waverly Neighborhood Council
- Jones McDonald Community Club
- Lincoln Park Community
- Lyon/Martin/Waverly Community Council
- Lyon Street Neighborhood
- Martin Luther King Neighborhood
- Pinehurst Community Council
- Quail Hollow
- Quail Hollow Village
- Quail Ridge
- Richland County Neighborhood Council
- River's Edge
- Robert Mills Historic Neighborhood
- Skyland Neighborhood Association
- The Gates at Quail Hollow
- Watermark Homeowner's Association

- Westover Acres
- Whaley Street Neighborhood
- Harbison Neighborhood Association
- Lake Quail Valley Neighborhood Association

UTILITIES

- City of Columbia Water & Sewer
- AT&T
- Lumen
- Charter
- Dominion Energy – Power Distribution, Power Transmission, Gas
- Segra
- City of West Columbia Water & Sewer
- MCI Communications
- South Carolina Water Utilities
- SCDOT ITS
- Dixie Pipeline
- Mid-Carolina Electric

TRANSPORTATION RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

- Central Midlands RTA
- The COMET
- Checker Yellow Cab
- Capitol City Cab
- Blue Ribbon Taxi
- Five Points Taxi Van
- Hoffman Travel
- Columbia Shuttle Service

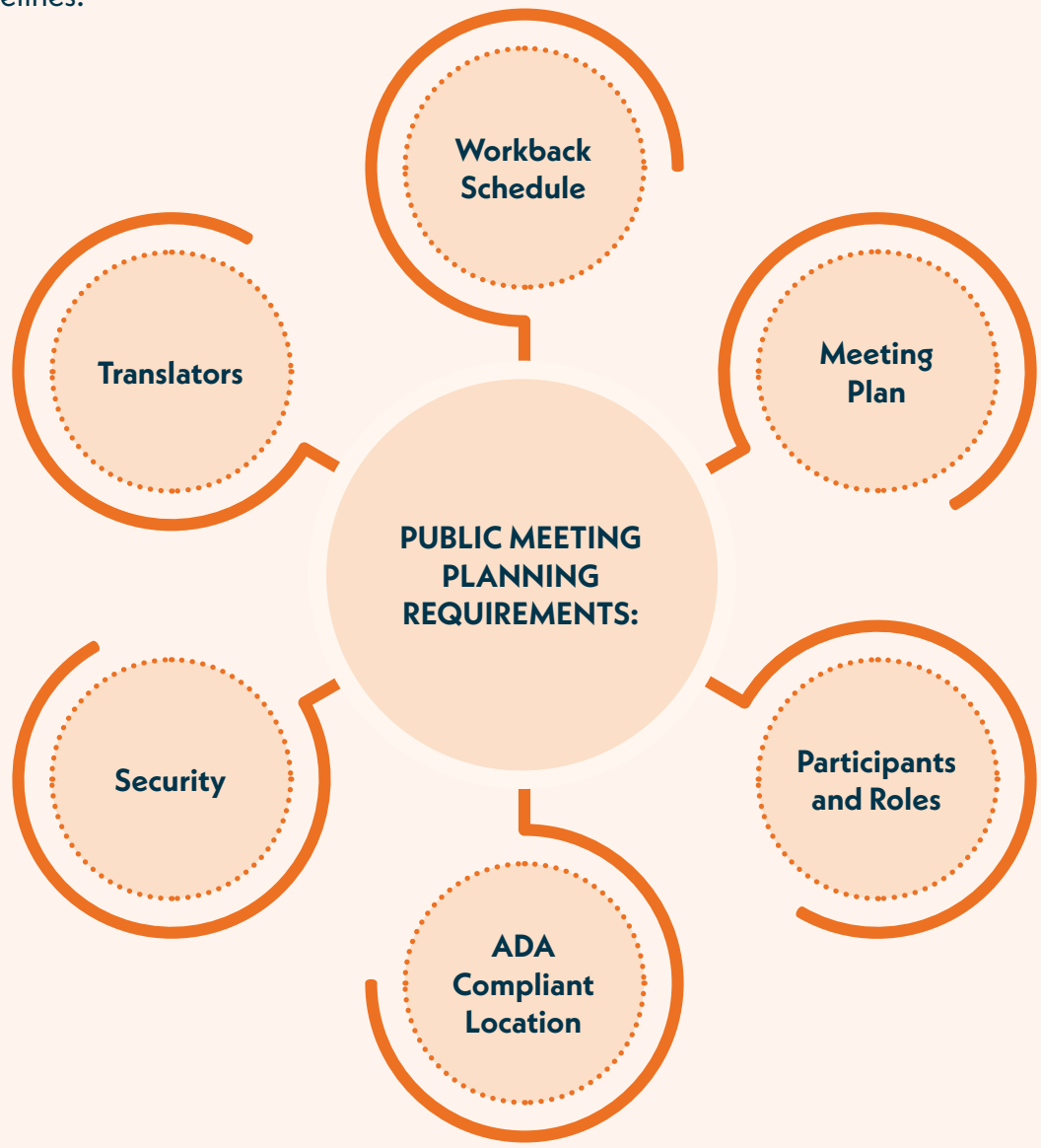


Appendix C - Protocols for Communications Tools and Community Engagement Strategies

Public Meetings

Public meetings will be scheduled to take place within 60 days of phase construction kick-off or when critical project updates need to be presented directly to the public.

The meetings should take place on a Tuesday or Thursday between 5 to 7 p.m. and be held at locations within the project footprint. All public meetings are required to follow SCDOT policies and guidelines.



Speakers' Bureau Presentations

A speaker's bureau presentation will be developed to further engage community groups and stakeholders at their regularly scheduled meetings. These presentations will allow for greater reach in the community and will provide the opportunity to share information about the Project outside of traditional public meetings. In addition to events held prior to Phase 1 of the Project, speaker's bureau events began in February 2019 and continue throughout the project.

Stakeholder groups can submit a presentation request through the project website. Submissions will be automatically routed to the project email account. The presentation will be scripted, and designated project staff will be trained on presentation delivery. At times, the presentation may need to be customized based on the audience.

SPEAKER'S BUREAU PROCESS

1. Requests come in via project email, hotline, website, or directly from SCDOT or the project team.
2. The HDR public involvement project manager coordinates the date, time, and location of the meeting. They will also confirm audience type (technical or general), specific points of interest, and a/v availability. They will place calendar holds for the speaker, PI coordinator, and possible proxy. The hold should include a notification for two weeks ahead of the event.
3. The PI coordinator will develop presentation deck and submit to SCDOT for review and final approval. If there is a proxy presenting, they will also review and offer comments.
4. On the day of the presentation, the PI coordinator will attend the meeting to support the presenter with set-up and Q/A.

Note that meeting reports are not delivered following these events.

Quarterly Newsletters

Newsletters are produced and distributed via USPS Every Door Direct Mail to all mail routes within the project footprint and via email to the full project email list. The newsletter is also uploaded to the project website. The distribution schedule is below.

Winter (December – January)

Spring (April – May)

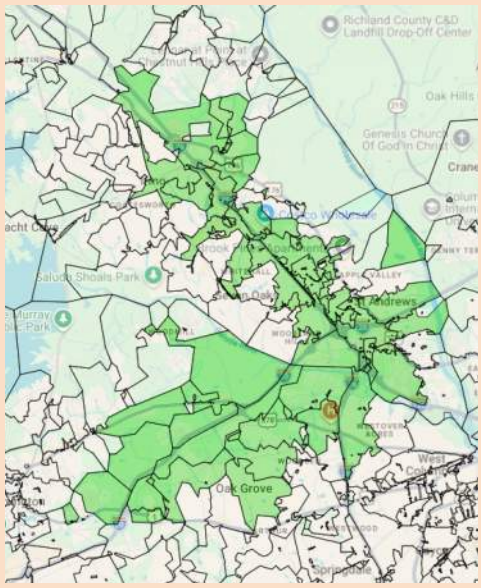
Summer (July – August)

Fall (October – November)

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION PROCESS

1. DESA and CDM Smith coordinate to outline the themes and topics of the issue.
2. CDM Smith provides photos and content bullets. DESA designs the first draft.
3. The core public involvement team reviews the first draft.
4. The full public involvement team reviews the second draft.
5. SCDOT reviews and approves the final draft.

EDDM Routes



20212 - C056	29210 - C047	29212 - C083
29063 - R009	29210 - C051	29212 - C089
29063 - R014	29210 - C053	29212 - C091
29063 - R016	29210 - C059	29073 - R013
29063 - R022	29210 - C059	29072 - R066
29169 - C001	29210 - C062	29072 - R051
29169 - C009	29210 - C063	29072 - R047
29169 - C014	29210 - C066	29072 - C002
29169 - C029	29210 - C076	29073 - R009
29170 - C011	29210 - C079	29073 - R010
29210 - C001	29210 - C088	29073 - R035
29210 - C028	29212 - C061	29169 - C007
29210 - C029	29212 - C082	

Social Media

As construction continues, the project team will implement an ongoing social media strategy that provides timely updates, advertises events, and educates stakeholders on the Project through compelling imagery. Social media targeting tools will be utilized to ensure messages are received in stakeholder feeds.

Google Ads and social media marketing will be utilized to target customers through websites with advertising about in-person and online community meetings.

STRATEGIES

The public involvement team will use the following strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the Project's Facebook and X pages:

- Follow groups (organizations and agencies) related to the project to remain current on issues.
- Create a network of followers by encouraging key groups to follow the Project's feed and to forward messages to their followers and friends.
- Post information on traffic updates, lane closures, etc. to provide the public with project awareness throughout construction.
- Encourage followers and friends to interact with content by posting questions, comments, and experiences.
- Develop a protocol for managing social media networks and content contributions.
- Develop a draft content document with message ideas.
- Develop a schedule with message timing.
- Monitor online conversations regarding the Project to gauge public sentiment and assess the need for changes to messaging.

- Refer interested users to the Project website.
- Build a consistent voice and identity across all platforms for the Project.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. Project team provides photos and construction updates.
2. PI coordinator creates monthly content calendar with assistance from relevant support including graphic design.
3. PI manager QCs content calendar.
4. SCDOT gives final approval.
5. PI coordinator schedules distribution.

Comment Management

The HDR public involvement team will lead all efforts in investigating and resolving project-related inquiries and concerns from the public. The team will work within SCDOT required timeframes and provide responses directly to the public for all related to construction activities within project limits.

ROLES

- **Hotline Phone Operator:** Monitors the telephone hotline; completes online form; submits inquiries - currently assigned to DESA staff.
- **Comment Coordinator:** Monitors the comment management platform (Zoho) and email for new comments; assigns comments for response; follows up on outstanding comments; forwards comments to SCDOT for final approval; submits final response to commenter; updates/manages comment management platform, currently assigned to DESA staff.
- **Comment Support:** Consults with the subject matter expert; drafts initial response; seeks approval from SME - currently assigned to HDR Public Involvement Team.
- **Quality Control:** Provides oversight and quality control of the process; ensures inquiries are closed timely - currently assigned to HDR public involvement manager.

- **Final Approval:** Provides expressed approval before written responses are submitted to commenter; may provide additional feedback or edited responses - currently assigned to the SCDOT project director and/or the SCDOT construction manager.
- **Subject Matter Experts (SME):** Researches the concern as necessary and collaborates with Comment Support staff to develop an appropriate response. Project SME's are identified below:

- Right of Way: Chris Johnston (SCDOT)
- Environmental/Noise Walls: Jennifer Pearson (HDR)
- Onsite Construction or General Construction Questions: Thad Brunson (OV)
- Utility Coordination: Derrick Bellamy (HDR)
- Schedule/Construction (General): Thad Brunson and OV Team
- Schedule/Programmatic (General): Matt Barnes/Theo Deligiannidis (HDR)
- Programmatic Historic Design (FEIS):
- David Kerns (HDR)
- Procurement: Ben Lewis/Lee Tupper
- Employment Opportunities: Contractor Teams (AUJV, UBJV)

- Phase 1:
  - Phase 1 Design/ROW: Lee Tupper (HDR)
  - Phase 1 Construction: Patrick Stinson/ Bradley Cain (OV), CC Amy Stinson
- Phase 2:
  - Phase 2 Design/ROW: Lee Tupper (HDR)
  - Phase 2 Construction: Charles Eleazer/ Tyler Johnson (OV), CC Amy Stinson
- Phase 3 sub-phases:
  - Phase 3 Design/ROW: Lee Tupper (HDR)
  - Phase 3 Construction: Phase-specific
- Phases 4 & 5 Design:
  - Phases 4 & 5 Design/ROW: Lee Tupper (HDR)
  - Phases 4 & 5 Construction: TBD

- Misc. (soil/rock collection, noise, pets) – Thad Brunson and OV Team/Ben Lewis and/or Raven Gambrell

Processes

The comment management process begins when a comment is entered in Zoho, an online platform for managing and tracking comments and commentators. Comments submitted via the 'Contact Us' webform on the Project website are automatically entered in Zoho. For other comments, project team members enter information in the webform or directly in Zoho, ensuring that all comments are captured and tracked. Comments can be received via email, phone, mail, or in person to SCDOT or project team members.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM WEBSITE FORM AND EMAIL

-Website form: scdotcarolinacrossroads.com/contact/
-Email: info@scdotcarolinacrossroads.com

General Comment Management Process

1. The comment is logged in Zoho and the tracking spreadsheet is updated.
2. The comment coordinator assigns the comment to an available comment support staff and logs it on the comment tracker spreadsheet.
3. The comment support staff consults with the appropriate SME to determine an appropriate response and drafts a response.
4. Comment support sends the response to the SME for review/edit/approval. Additional staffers may be included for additional review and confirmation.
5. After review, the comment is submitted to the comment coordinator who reviews the response for clarity.
6. The comment coordinator sends the response for final approval.
   A. Not approved: The comment coordinator sends the response, along with any feedback, to comment support for correction.
   B. Approved: The comment coordinator sends the response to the original commenter. The comment is updated and closed in Zoho, and the tracking spreadsheet is updated.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE HOTLINE Hotline: 1-800-601-8715	1. The comment is received via the hotline, which is captured on the webform. 2. Follow the general comment management process. 3. Instead of replying via email, a phone call could also be made to the caller directly by the comment supporter or a subject matter expert. 4. The comment coordinator will be made aware of all additional action taken and will close the comment in Zoho.
COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM SCDOT. See Option A or Option B on following page.	SCDOT executive offices and staff will often receive comments and communications regarding the Project. These communications are forwarded to the SCDOT project director. The project director will assess the comment and determine how to proceed.



Option A. Delegate to the comment management team.	Option B. Project director manages the comment directly.
1. Forward the original comment/ correspondence to info@scdotcarolinacrossroads.com (copying others as appropriate) with instructions on how to proceed. 2. The comment coordinator will proceed in accordance with the general comment management process. If a return phone call is required, follow the hotline protocol.	1. Once the project director has managed the comment, they will forward the comment and the action taken to info@ scdotcarolinacrossroads.com (copying others as appropriate). 2. Comment coordinator logs and closes the comment in Zoho.
COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA POSTAL MAIL	Communications received by mail will be scanned and emailed to info@scdotcarolinacrossroads.com. The comment coordinator will log the comment into Zoho and proceed with the comment management process. Once a draft has been finalized, the coordinator will mail the response and log any additional correspondence into Zoho.
COMMENTS COMMUNICATED DIRECTLY TO THE PROJECT SITE TEAM The contractor will give contact information cards to the public and ask people to use the information on the cards to contact the PI team. Examples of comments in this category include complaints of damage to property, questions about ROW, concerns about noise, speaker requests, etc. To assist with compliance, there will be a standing agenda item on the bi-weekly communications meeting to discuss comments.	In the event the OV team receives a comment and/or engages with a member of the public directly, they will notify SCDOT and the project team by sending a record of the interaction to the project email address. The email should include the following information: - Name - Phone number - Email address - Nature of the comment/complaint - Contractor team's response and/or action taken - Any additional support or information required from the team Once the comment management team receives the information, the comment coordinator will log the comment in Zoho by following the established process.

COMMENTS RECEIVED AT PUBLIC MEETINGS	COMMENTS RECEIVED AT SPEAKER BUREAU EVENTS
Comments received at public meetings will follow the comment management process.	Comments received at public meetings will follow the comment management process.

Traffic Incident and Crisis Communications Plan

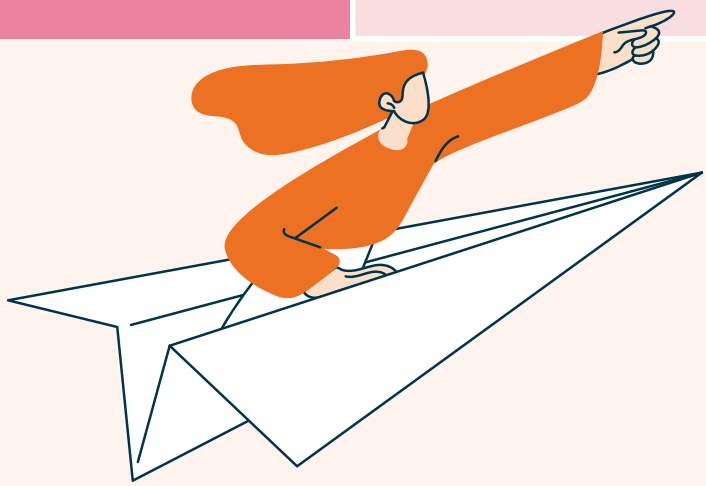
The Traffic Incident and Crisis Communications Plan (TICCP) ensures that communication efforts associated with a crisis situation or incident are handled through SCDOT.

To facilitate early and accurate notification to the crisis response team leader, contact information for the SCDOT and HDR public involvement teams will be provided to the contractor. SCDOT staff will attend pre-construction meetings to provide a detailed explanation of the methods and protocols for communicating urgent or critical situations to the SCDOT and HDR public relations team.

During and immediately following an emergency situation or on-site incident that is deemed significant enough to be newsworthy by the crisis team lead, the contractor will follow a pre-approved communications plan that aligns with the operating procedures laid out in this crisis plan. The HDR public involvement team will coordinate and lead all media relations and social media messaging during times of crisis with oversight and approvals from SCDOT.

CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	
SCDOT PR and Communications Office	- Crisis communication team lead; first point of contact for issues, team coordination, immediate media, and site coordination. - Act as media spokesperson.
SCDOT Alternative Delivery Team	- SCDOT point of contact; responsible for overall project information, remote guidance, and site management when possible; provides subject matter and overall project information. - Act as alternative media spokesperson
HDR	- Coordinates response support as directed by SCDOT.
CDM Smith	- On-site coordination, support, and verification of incident details.
Contractor Teams	- Provides pertinent project updates and information to the crisis response team. - Coordinates communications with SCDOT traffic operations center and crisis team.

CRISIS RESPONSE LEVELS	
MINOR	- Minor crash with no injuries. - Minimal traffic disruption complaints. - Minimal business/resident complaints. - The situation is attracting slow but steady media coverage. - External stakeholders receive media inquiries.
MODERATE	- Injury and minimal property damage but no casualties have occurred. - Situation causing growing attention from local and regional media. - Affected and potentially affected parties are talking to the media.
MAJOR	- Serious injury, significant property damage, or casualties have occurred. - Media has immediate and urgent need for information. - One or more groups or individuals express anger or outrage. - Media is on site for live coverage. - Stakeholders and community partners are present at site. - Likely requires SCDOT secretary, legal counsel.



TICCP PROCESS	
1. **VERIFY AND ASSESS**	- Incident occurs. - SCDOT alternative delivery team is notified.
2. **ASSESS THE CRISIS LEVEL**	- SCDOT project director assesses the incident and determines the crisis response level.

3. **NOTIFICATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS**	- SCDOT communications and alternative delivery teams will coordinate to determine the level of required support from the project PI team.
	  - If a low level of support is requested, the project PI team will follow the minor incident process unless otherwise directed.
	  - If a high level of support is requested, the project PI team will follow the major incident process unless otherwise directed.

4. **RESPOND**	- If the SCDOT communications team determines to handle in-house, the project PI team will remain on standby to support until the matter is closed. - If the project PI team is asked to lead the response, they will do so with direction of the SCDOT project director.
5. **MONITOR**	- Technical teams including CDM Smith, contractor personnel, and other HDR staff will remain on standby to provide details and technical support until the matter is closed. HDR will monitor media mentions for incident coverage and report findings.
6. **CLOSE OUT**	- SCDOT will advise the project team on when the matter is considered closed.



Press Releases and Media Advisories

NAMING CONVENTION

1st Draft	DRAFT_subject_yearmonthdate_v.1
2nd Draft	DRAFT_subject_yearmonthdate_v.2
3rd Draft	DRAFT_subject_yearmonthdate_v.3
Final Draft	FINAL_subject_yearmonthdate



PRESS RELEASE/MEDIA ADVISORY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS	
1	- The contractor's PI team creates the first draft of the press release labeled: DRAFT_subject_yearmonthdate_v.1. - The contractor's PI team sends the first draft to the HDR PI team.
2	- HDR's PI team reviews and revises the first draft. - HDR's PI team creates a second draft labeled: DRAFT_subject_ yearmonthdate_v.2 and sends it to the OV Engineers. The v.1 recipients and the contractor's PI team should be copied on this email. - HDR initiates the design process for any accompanying visuals.
3	- The second draft is sent back to HDR's PI team with comments. - HDR's PI team makes final revisions and creates a third draft labeled: DRAFT_subject_yearmonthdate_v.3. - HDR's PI team finalizes accompanying visuals. - HDR's PI team sends the third draft and visuals to SCDOT for review. - All previous draft recipients should be copied.
4	- SCDOT sends any final requests for edits to the release and/or visuals back to the HDR PI team. - HDR's PI team creates a final draft labeled: FINAL_subject_yearmonthdate and sends it back to the SCDOT project director. The full team should be copied on that email.
5	- SCDOT project director sends the final draft to the SCDOT communications team. - The SCDOT Communications Team will review and will make their own final edits.
6	- The press release will be distributed via the distribution protocols.



Release Distribution Protocols (Who is responsible for distributing releases via which platforms)		
SCDOT	**HDR**	**CONTRACTOR TEAM**
- Media - SCDOT Website - Online maps follow-up *(Google/Waze, Apple)*	- Key stakeholders - Project website - SCDOT traffic - Online maps 1st touch	- 511

CAROLINA
CROSSROADS