



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

South Carolina

August 22, 2024

1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
803-765-5411

Mr. Chad Long
Director Environmental Services Office
South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)
955 Park Street, P.O. Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. Long:

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has received your letter requesting a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination for the Proposed I-526 Lowcountry Corridor & Long Point Road Interchange Improvements Project (Project ID P041314). Based on the information provided to complete the environmental process the FHWA finds that the project will have no significant impacts therefore, a FONSI determination is justified. Please proceed accordingly with the publication of the notice of availability of location and preliminary design approval and availability of the FONSI. The final documentation is to be made available to the public upon request. A notice of the FONSI approval shall be sent to the affected units of Federal, State, and local governments. A notice shall also be sent to the State inter-governmental review contacts established under Executive Order 12372.

We have also reviewed the Interchange Access Request (IAR) dated December 19, 2022, for a modified Interstate access to be located at approximately mile marker 28 along I-526. The improvements would provide new access to the Wando Welch Terminal (WWT) for port-related traffic along with an improved partial cloverleaf interchange at the existing I-526/Long Point Road Interchange. As the selected alternative contained in the NEPA document is consistent with the IAR, the proposed access revision to the Interstate System is approved. Please note that the approved access revision is valid for a period of three years and must be re-assessed if not advanced to construction within this time frame.

By our adoption of the FONSI and completion of the public comment/hearing requirements of 23 U.S.C. 128, the SCDOT is authorized to proceed with further project development. Please ensure that the project commitments made during the NEPA process are included in the project construction proposal and ultimately carried out. Please address any questions to Mr. J. Shane Belcher at jeffrey.belcher@dot.gov/803-253-3187 or Mr. Jim Martin at james.martin@dot.gov/803-765-5693.

Sincerely,

Emily O. Lawton
Division Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Kit Scott, SCDOT Program Manager
Will McGoldrick, SCDOT Design Build NEPA Coordinator

Finding of No Significant Impact
I-526 Lowcountry Corridor Long Point Road Interchange
Improvements

Charleston County

August 12, 2024



The following persons may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

Mr. J. Shane Belcher
Lead Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
(803) 253-3187

Ms. Kit Scott, PE
Program Manager
South Carolina Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 191
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-0191
(803) 737-1138

Date: 08/12/2024



NEPA ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS FORM



Project ID	P041314	County:	Charleston	District:	District 6	Doc Type:	FONSI	Total # of Commitments:	19
------------	---------	---------	------------	-----------	------------	-----------	-------	-------------------------	----

Project Name: I-526/Long Point Road Interchange Improvements Project

The Environmental Commitment **Contractor Responsible** measures listed below **are to be included in the contract and must be implemented**. It is the responsibility of the Program Manager to make sure the Environmental Commitment **South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Responsible** measures are adhered to. If there are questions regarding the commitments listed, please contact:

CONTACT NAME: Kit Scott, PE **PHONE:** (803) 737-1138

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

Community - Transportation and Traffic	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.1	Responsibility:	Contractor
SCDOT and the contractor will coordinate with emergency service providers such as police, fire protection, and ambulance services prior to the start of construction to maintain access for emergency vehicles.				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Relocations	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.4	Responsibility:	SCDOT
The SCDOT will acquire all new right-of-way and process any relocations in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (42 U.S. C. 4601 et seq.). The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that owners of real property to be acquired for Federal and federally-assisted projects are treated fairly and consistently, to encourage and expedite acquisition by agreements with such owner, to minimize litigation and relieve congestion in the courts, and to promote public confidence in Federal and federally-assisted land acquisition programs. Relocation resources would be made available to all eligible displaced residents, including tenants, without discrimination, consistent with the requirements of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1974.				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Air Quality	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.5	Responsibility:	Contractor
The contractor(s) will ensure particulate matter emissions will be minimized by using appropriate fugitive dust control measures. Construction-related Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) emissions will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Provisions will be included in project plans and specifications requiring contractors to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction air quality impacts through abatement measures, as appropriate.				
The contractor(s) will ensure that all construction equipment is properly tuned and maintained. Idling time will be minimized to save fuel and reduce emissions. There will be no open burning of removed vegetation.				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Noise	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.7	Responsibility:	SCDOT
SCDOT will inform local planning officials of future, generalized noise levels expected to occur in the project vicinity after FHWA has made a final decision on the environmental document.				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

Noise	NEPA Doc Ref:	FONSI Chapter 4, Section 4.8	Responsibility:	SCDOT
<p>SCDOT will develop a public relations plan addressing notices to be sent to the public for updates and notifications regarding schedule, upcoming construction activities, and potential temporary impacts (e.g., noise, traffic shifts, etc.). The public relations plan will be used to prepare the public notices that will be used by SCDOT's communications office and other methods and means of notification as outlined in the public relations plan. Timeframes for notification and updates shall be included in the public relations plan and may require approval from the Resident Construction Engineer (RCE).</p> <p>The contractor shall follow SCDOT construction standard procedure as defined in SCDOT Construction Manual and Standards and Specifications. A total of four noise barriers were determined to be feasible and reasonable and recommended as mitigation of traffic noise for the Preferred Alternative. A detailed description of the noise barrier locations and/or noise abatement measures are presented in the Noise Analysis Report (Appendix E).</p> <p>Based on studies completed to date, SCDOT intends to install highway traffic noise abatement measures in the form of four noise barriers. These preliminary abatement measures are based upon preliminary design. The noise abatement walls are identified in the Noise Analysis Report are Noise Wall 1a/3/6/8 (located north of I-526 and west of Long Point Road between the Wando River bridge and Belle Hall Parkway); Noise Wall NW 2a/4 (located south of I-526 between the Wando River bridge and Ridge Road); Noise Wall 9 (located south of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Lone Tree Drive and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek); and Noise Wall 12 (located north of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Long Point Road and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek).</p> <p>The noise barriers above were determined to be feasible and reasonable in the report and shall be constructed by the CONTRACTOR. A final confirmation of the configuration, placement and installation of the abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project's final design and final noise analysis completed by the CONTRACTOR.</p> <p>To minimize future traffic noise impacts on currently undeveloped lands of Type I projects, per 23 CFR 772.17 SCDOT shall inform local officials by providing a copy of the noise analysis within whose jurisdiction the proposed highway project is located.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Water Quality	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Appendix K, Section 5.0	Responsibility:	SCDOT
<p>The contractor will be required to minimize possible water quality impacts through implementation of best management practices (BMPs), reflecting policies contained in 23 CFR 650B and the Department's Supplemental Specification on Erosion Control Measures (latest edition) and Supplemental Technical Specifications on Seeding (latest edition). Other measures including seeding, silt fences, sediment basins, etc. as appropriate will be implemented during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Stormwater	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Appendix K, Section 4.2	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>Stormwater control measures, both during construction and post-construction, are required for SCDOT projects with land disturbance and/or constructed in the vicinity of 303(d), total maximum daily load (TMDL), outstanding resource water (ORW), tidal, and other sensitive waters in accordance with SCDOT's MS4 Permit. The selected contractor would be required to minimize potential stormwater impacts through implementation of construction BMPs, reflecting policies contained in 23 CFR 650 B and SCDOT's Supplemental Specifications on Seed and Erosion Control Measures (latest edition).</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Wetlands	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.9	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>The limits of any clearing, grading, or fill in wetlands will be delineated and shown on approved permitted plans by USACE and SCDES. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with all applicable permits and permit conditions for the placement of fill in wetlands. Compensatory mitigation would be required to offset unavoidable losses of Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) per USACE requirements.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Individual Permit	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.10	Responsibility:	SCDOT
<p>Impacts to jurisdictional waters will be permitted under a Department of the Army Section 404 permit from the USACE. For impacts to freshwater wetlands, SCDOT plans to purchase credits from an USACE approved Mitigation Bank. The specific bank to purchase Salt Marsh credits for those impacts in the critical area has not been identified, however the Department commits to purchasing these credits from an USACE approved mitigation bank.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Floodplains	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.11	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>The Engineer of Record will send a set of final plans and request for floodplain management compliance to Charleston County's Floodplain Administrator.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

Floodplains	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.11	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>Hydraulic and hydrologic studies will be completed by the contractor on the Preferred Alternative during the final design phase of the project. Bridge structures will be designed per FEMA standards. The project will be designed in an effort to meet "No-Rise" requirements. Pursuant to the FEMA certification, the project will be designed to allow for no more than 1-foot increase in flood elevations. In the event a "No-Rise" condition cannot be achieved, coordination with FEMA will require the preparation of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR)/Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) package for the encroachment.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Threatened and Endangered Species – All species	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.13; Appendix J	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with USFWS will be reinitiated if/when new rule and listing designation goes into effect for any species. • Temporary lighting during bridge construction and improvements will be directed away from suitable bat habitat during the active season (March 1st through November 15th) of the northern long-eared bat and other bat species. March 1st through November 15th is the time frame when bats are considered most active in the coastal plain. • To the extent practicable, tree removal will not exceed what is required for project construction (Preferred Alternative alignment and temporary work areas). Tree-clearing restrictions would take place between April 1st through July 31st and December 15th through February 15th. 				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Migratory Bird Treaty Act	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.14	Responsibility:	Contractor
<p>The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 USC § 703-711, states that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer to or sell, barter, purchase, deliver or cause to be shipped, exported, imported, transported, carried or received any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not. SCDOT will comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 in regard to the avoidance of taking of individual migratory birds and the destruction of their active nests.</p> <p>The contractor shall notify the RCE at least four (4) weeks prior to construction/demolition/maintenance of bridges and box culverts. The RCE will coordinate with SCDOT's Environmental Services Office (ESO), Compliance Division, to determine if there are any active birds using the structure. After coordination, it will be determined when construction/demolition/maintenance can begin. If a nest is observed that was not discovered after construction/demolition/maintenance has begun, the contractor will cease work and immediately notify the RCE, who will notify SCDOT's ESO Compliance Division. The ESO Compliance Division will determine the next course of action.</p> <p>The use of any deterrents by the contractor designed to prevent birds from nesting, shall be approved by the RCE with coordination from the ESO Compliance Division. The cost for any contractor provided deterrents will be provided at no additional cost to SCDOT.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Essential Fish Habitat	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.17/Appendix K, Section 4.1	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary silt/turbidity curtains will be installed prior to the commencement of in-water work, where practicable. The contractor will be required to utilize SCDOT BMPs for soil and erosion control during construction. • For construction activities associated with the two bridges over the unnamed tributary to Rathall Creek, which may include the widening of shoulders and bridge structures, no temporary or permanent piles will be placed in the channel of the creek. • The Contractor will be required to minimize impacts of siltation and erosion through implementation of BMPs. • SCDOT, FHWA, and the contractor will develop the mitigation plan in coordination with the appropriate resource agencies. A final mitigation plan will be developed for the 404/401 permit and will include consideration for impacts to essential fish habitat as part of that plan. 				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Hazardous Materials	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.18	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>SCDOT will avoid hazardous materials sites where practicable or sufficiently remediate so that the public will not be exposed to potential health risks. The contractor(s) will follow SCDOT's Standard Specifications, which include provisions to protect the health and safety of persons in the proximity of construction and staging sites. Lead and asbestos testing would be conducted prior to construction to ensure that materials are handled appropriately.</p> <p>If avoidance of hazardous materials is not a viable alternative and soils that appear to be contaminated are encountered during construction, SCDES will be informed immediately. Hazardous materials will be tested and removed and/or treated in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and SCDES requirements. SCDES Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal compliance staff can be contacted at 803-898-0290.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

Hazardous Materials	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Appendix L, Section 6.3	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>Prior to right-of-way acquisition or construction activities, additional field investigations may be required at parcels of concern identified during the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey. Seven parcels of concern were identified and recommended for further investigation prior to land disturbance or ROW activities. A Phase II Assessment will be required on the parcels of concern with the potential to be affected by activities within the project footprint. The list of parcels of concern and recommended soil and groundwater sampling are presented in the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey (Appendix L). Sampling shall follow applicable SCDES environmental standard operating procedures.</p> <p>Any right-of-way acquisition or construction activities occurring on parcels not evaluated in the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey must complete an analysis to determine potential for Hazardous Materials/Waste. This shall include a review of available state and federal environmental records to obtain information regarding any past or current hazardous waste disposal sites, reported petroleum or hazardous waste releases, listed hazardous waste generation, transportation, storage, or disposal facilities, listed solid waste disposal facilities, and other issues related to reported environmental contamination problems. If additional parcels of concern are identified, and are to be impacted, a Phase II Assessment will be needed.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Cultural Resources	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.19	Responsibility:	Contractor
<p>During construction, the contractor and subcontractors must notify their workers to watch for the presence of any prehistoric or historic remains, including but not limited to arrowheads, pottery, ceramics, flakes, bones, graves, gravestones, or brick concentrations. If any such remains are encountered, the RCE will be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials and site work shall cease until the SCDOT Archaeologist directs otherwise.</p> <p>If unanticipated cultural materials (for example, large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the resident construction engineer (RCE) will be immediately notified and all work near the discovered materials will cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office (CIN-THPO).</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

Cultural Resources	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Chapter 4, Section 4.19	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<p>The Preferred Alternative will result in an adverse effect on the archaeological site 38CH2683. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with the memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the site in coordination with SHPO, SCDOT, FHWA, and stakeholders.</p>				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

Cultural Resources - MOA	NEPA Doc Ref:	EA Appendix N	Responsibility:	SCDOT/Contractor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCDOT's archaeological consultant, or staff, will develop a treatment plan for data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The treatment plan will include a description of the project's research design and sampling strategy. The treatment plan will be submitted to SHPO for review and approval prior to any fieldwork. The SHPO will make a reasonable effort to review the treatment plan(s) no later than thirty days after receipt. All archaeological and historical investigation will be carried out by professionals who meet Secretary of the Interior's qualifications. • All plans and reports developed for the treatment of Archaeological Site 38CH2683 shall incorporate guidance from the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation" (48 FR 44734-37) and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication, Treatment of Archaeological Properties (ACHP 1980). In addition, these materials will be consistent with South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). • At least one on-site (or virtual) meeting between the SCDOT, FHWA, and SHPO will take place during field investigations in order to discuss any necessary revisions to the original scope of work. Any revisions made to the original scope of work will be attached to the approved treatment plan and this agreement. • A draft technical report of data recovery investigations will be submitted to the SHPO for review and approval within twelve (12) months from the last day of fieldwork. The draft technical report will be consistent with the standards outlined in South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). The SHPO reserves the right to submit the draft technical report to qualified professional archaeologists for the purpose of peer review. • Within three months of the draft report approval, SCDOT will provide one bound copy and one digital copy for SHPO and two bound copies and one PDF copy of the final technical report for the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). The PDF file will be developed according to the specifications and requirements of the SHPO. A separate digital abstract from the report (in Word or html format) will also be provided to SHPO. The abstract file can be provided on the same CD as the PDF file. • SCDOT will ensure that all artifacts recovered during archaeological investigations are stabilized and processed for curation at the SCIAA. SCDOT will notify SHPO when artifacts have been given over to SCIAA for curation. • SCDOT shall develop a public education component related to the data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. SCDOT shall submit a plan for the public education component to SHPO within six months of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. SCDOT shall implement a plan for developing public materials within two years of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. • If unanticipated cultural materials (e.g., large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the Resident Construction Engineer shall be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials shall cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with SHPO. • Each year following the execution of this MOA until it expires or is terminated, the SCDOT shall provide all parties to this MOA a summary report detailing work carried out pursuant to its terms. Such report shall include any scheduling changes proposed, any problems encountered, and any disputes and objections received in FHWA's and SCDOT's efforts to carry out the terms of this MOA. 				
				<input type="checkbox"/> Special Provision

A

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ACE	Agency Coordination Effort
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ACS	American Community Survey
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
AVE	Area of Visual Effect

B

BCDCOG	Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments
BE	Biological Evaluation
BG	Block Group
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BLS	Below Land Surface
BMP	Best Management Practice
BCM	Bureau of Coastal Management
BTEX	Benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene

C

CAA	Clean Air Act
CD	Collector-distributor
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESQG	Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators
CHATS	Charleston Area Transportation Study
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIA	Community Impact Assessment
CMP	Congestion Management Process
CofC	College of Charleston
CT	Census Tract
CWA	Clean Water Act
CZC	Coastal Zone Consistency

D

dB	Decibel
dB(A)	A-weighted Decibel Levels
DDI	Diverging Diamond Interchange
DO	Dissolved Oxygen
DPT	Direct Push Technology

E

E+C	Existing and Committed
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECHO	Enforcement and Compliance History Online
EDR	Environmental Database Report
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EFIS	Environmental Facility Information System
EJ	Environmental Justice
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act

F

FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FID	Flame-ionization Detector
FINDS	Facility Index System
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FW	Freshwater

G

GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GWCI	Groundwater Contamination Inventory

H

HAPC	Habitat Area of Particular Concern
HCS	Highway Capacity Software
HMS	Highly Migratory Species
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code

I

I-526	Interstate 526
ICE	Infrastructure Carbon Estimator
ICIS	Integrated Compliance Information System

L

LCC	Lowcountry Corridor
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LOI	Letter of Intent
LOS	Level of Service
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank

M

MAFMC	Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MLS	Multiple Listing Service
MMPA	Marine Mammal Protection Act
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOVES	Motor Vehicle Emissions Simulator
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems
MSAT	Mobile Source Air Toxics

N

NAC	Noise Abatement Criteria
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFA	No Further Action
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NLCD	National Land Cover Database
NLEB	Northern long-eared bat
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSA	Noise Study Area
NWI	National Wetland Inventory

O

OCRM	Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration

P

PAH	Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages
PID	Photo-ionization Detector
PIM	Public Information Meeting
PIP	Public Involvement Plan
PRP	Potentially Responsible Parties
PSA	Project Study Area

Q

QAPP	Quality Assurance Program Plan
------	--------------------------------

R

RCE	Resident Construction Engineer
RCR	Registry of Conditional Remedies
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RCW	Red-cockaded woodpecker
REC	Recognized Environmental Concern
RGA	Recovered Government Archive
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-of-Way

S

SAFMC	South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
SC	South Carolina
SCDAH	South Carolina Department of Archives and History
SCDES	South Carolina Department of Environmental Services ¹
SCDHEC	South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control ²
SCDNR	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SCDOT	South Carolina Department of Transportation
SCIAA	South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology
SCPA	South Carolina Ports Authority

¹ On July 1, 2024, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) became South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) and South Carolina Department of Public Health (DPH). The environmental roles and responsibilities of SCDHEC will continue under SCDES.

² See footnote 1.

SEMS	Superfund Enterprise Management System
SFH	Shellfish Harvesting
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SHWS	State Hazardous Waste Sites
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SMGA	Shellfish Management Growing Areas
SMU	Soil Management Unit
SPUI	Single Point Urban Interchange
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

T

TDM	Travel Demand Model
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TNM	Traffic Noise Model
TRIS	Toxic Chemical Release Inventory System
TRPH	Total recoverable petroleum hydrocarbons
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act
TSM	Transportation System Management

U

U.S.	United States
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
UT	Unnamed Tributary

V

VCP	Voluntary Cleanup Program
VIA	Visual Impact Assessment
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds

W

WNS	White-nose syndrome
-----	---------------------

WOTUS	Waters of the United States
WWT	Wando Welch Terminal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION.....	1-1
2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED.....	2-1
2.1 Project Purpose.....	2-1
2.2 Project Need	2-1
3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED.....	3-1
3.1 Alternatives Evaluation Process.....	3-1
3.1.1 Reasonable Alternative.....	3-2
3.1.2 Selected Alternative.....	3-3
3.2 Revisions Since Approval of the EA.....	3-5
3.2.1 Project Design Revisions	3-5
3.2.2 Fiscal Constraint Updates	3-5
3.2.3 Threatened and Endangered Species Updates.....	3-5
3.2.4 Environmental Commitment Revisions	3-6
4.0 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS RELATED TO THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE	4-1
4.1 Land Use.....	4-1
4.2 Farmlands.....	4-1
4.3 Environmental Justice	4-1
4.4 Visual Resources	4-2
4.5 Relocations.....	4-4
4.6 Air Quality	4-5
4.7 Climate Change	4-6
4.8 Noise	4-7
4.9 Water Quality.....	4-10
4.10 Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.....	4-11
4.11 Environmental Permits	4-13
4.12 Floodplains.....	4-14
4.13 Natural Habitat & Wildlife	4-14
4.14 Threatened and Endangered Species	4-14
4.15 Migratory Birds	4-16
4.16 Bald Eagle.....	4-16
4.17 Marine Mammals.....	4-17
4.18 Essential Fish Habitat	4-17
4.19 Hazardous Material Sites	4-18
4.20 Cultural Resources	4-18
5.0 PROJECT COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	5-1

5.1 Letter of Intent.....	5-1
5.2 Agency Coordination Meetings.....	5-1
5.3 Public Information Meeting	5-2
5.4 Public Hearing	5-2
5.5 Public Hearing Comments.....	5-3
6.0 BASIS FOR FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	6-1

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Study Area Map	1-1
Figure 1.2: Existing I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange	1-2
Figure 3.1: Selected Alternative Rendering	3-4
Figure 4.1: Existing View (left) and Proposed View (right) at Intersection of Wando Park Boulevard and Eighty Oak Avenue (Entrance to River Oaks Apartments)	4-3
Figure 5.1: Public Information Meeting Comments and Concerns.....	5-2

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Preliminary Range of Alternatives Considered	3-1
Table 3.2: Identified Reasonable Alternatives	3-2
Table 3.3: Potential Environmental Impacts.....	3-3
Table 3.6: Environmental Commitment Revisions Since Approval of the EA	3-6
Table 4.1: Relocations.....	4-4
Table 4.2: Change in Study Area VMT from the Selected Alternative (Alternative 2)	4-6
Table 4.3: Noise Impact Summary	4-8
Table 4.4: Recommended Noise Walls	4-9
Table 4.5: Modified Noise Wall 9.....	4-10
Table 4.6: Jurisdictional Wetlands in the Study Area	4-12
Table 4.7: Charleston County Federally Listed Species.....	4-15

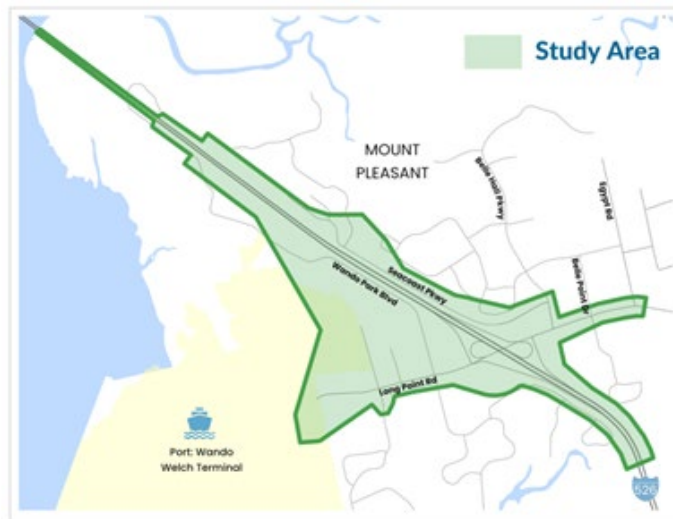
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Traffic Analysis Report Interchange Access Request
Appendix B: Community Impact Assessment
Appendix C: Visual Impact Assessment
Appendix D: Relocation Impact Study
Appendix E: Noise Analysis Report
Appendix F: Natural Resources Technical Memorandum
Appendix G: Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination
Appendix H: Critical Area Plat
Appendix I: SCDOT Bridge Replacement Scoping Trip

Appendix J: Biological Evaluation	
Appendix K: Essential Fish Habitat Technical Memorandum	
Appendix L: Hazardous Materials Technical Memorandum	
Appendix M: Cultural Resources Survey	
Appendix N: Cultural Resources Memorandum of Agreement	
Appendix O: Agency Coordination	
Appendix P: Public Involvement Plan	
Appendix Q: Public Involvement, Outreach Materials, Comments and Responses and Public Hearing Certification Package	
Appendix R: Floodplains	
Appendix S: Greenhouse Gas Analysis	
Appendix T: Air Quality Analysis	
Appendix U: Alternatives Analysis	
Appendix V: I-526 EAST PEL	

1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

Figure 1.1: Study Area Map



The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing improvements to the Interstate 526 (I-526) and Long Point Road interchange in the Town of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. The study area extends along I-526 from the Wando River to Hobcaw Creek and along Long Point Road from the South Carolina Ports Authority's (SCPA's) Wando Welch Terminal (WWT) to Egypt Road as shown in **Figure 1.1**.

In 2022, SCDOT completed a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study³ for I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC) EAST, from Virginia Avenue in North Charleston to United States (U.S.) 17 in Mount Pleasant. The PEL Study identified existing and projected transportation issues within the corridor through analysis as well as public and stakeholder engagement. The PEL Study established a vision to guide future transportation decision-making along the corridor. After issues along I-526 LCC EAST were better understood, potential improvements were identified and documented in the PEL Study. The I-526 and Long Point Road interchange was identified as a project that could be completed independently from the identified widening of I-526 LCC EAST.

The proposed improvements to the Long Point Road interchange are included in the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and are consistent with the goals and strategies defined in the CHATS Congestion Management Process (CMP).⁴ The project is also included in SCDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with an estimated total project cost of \$150 million. The preliminary project cost estimate ranges from \$280-360 million; however, due to changing market conditions and fluctuations in material costs, the project base cost is currently being re-evaluated.

The existing I-526 and Long Point Road interchange is a partial cloverleaf including four diamond interchange ramps and two loops in the northeast and southwest quadrants (see **Figure 1.2**). The improvements would provide new access to the WWT for port-related traffic along with an improved partial cloverleaf interchange. Collector-distributor (CD) roads would be used to help separate port-

³ <https://www.526lowcountrycorridor.com/east/pel/>

⁴ <https://bcdco.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CMP-Report-Draft.pdf>

related and local traffic. A realignment of a segment of Wando Park Boulevard to accommodate the proposed truck ramps and CD roads would also be completed as a part of the project. The existing partial cloverleaf interchange would be improved with larger loop ramps to allow for increased speeds to improve merging on to I-526 and would accommodate the planned widening of I-526.

Figure 1.2: Existing I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange



2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

2.1 PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to improve the operations of the I-526 mainline and the interchange at Long Point Road as well as reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic within the study area.

2.2 PROJECT NEED

The I-526 and Long Point Road interchange provides access to homes, businesses, schools, parks, restaurants, commercial and industrial facilities along Long Point Road. The interchange provides access to SCPA's WWT, which serves as a hub for the distribution of freight from the WWT throughout the southeast U.S. The need for the project is demonstrated by existing interchange deficiencies, growing automobile and truck traffic on I-526 and Long Point Road, in addition to population and economic growth.

The need for this project was identified through a comprehensive analysis of various sources of information. The I-526 LCC EAST PEL Study provided valuable insights into the existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities related to the project. Additionally, multiple engagement opportunities were conducted with SCDOT, federal, state, and local agencies, as well as project stakeholders and the public. The following needs have been identified:

- Operational Deficiencies at the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange
 - The current interchange and roadway configuration does not fully accommodate the existing traffic volumes nor the estimated future volumes (2050). Deficiencies in the current interchange configuration contribute to congestion, inadequate mobility, and longer travel times. Deficiencies include insufficient ramp lengths and storage capacity, tightly curved ramps, and insufficient length for weaving conditions.
- Traffic-Related Congestion on I-526 and within the I-526 and Long Point Road Interchange
 - The existing traffic volumes in the study area indicate that currently, the I-526 mainline experiences a range of congestion levels, ranging from level of service (LOS) A (free-flow conditions) to LOS E (unstable, congested conditions). This variability in LOS along the mainline is magnified due to the high volume of heavy trucks using the Long Point Road interchange to access the WWT. Future (2050) AM and PM peak hour LOS indicate that the I-526 mainline, east and west of the Long Point Road interchange, would fail because the existing one-lane ramps have inadequate storage capacity, resulting in backups onto the I-526 mainline.

- Population and Economic Growth
 - According to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau estimates, the Charleston region is growing three times faster than the national average, with 33 people moving to the region each day. The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) forecasts a 77 percent increase in regional population between 2015-2050. The anticipated growth in cargo volumes processed at the WWT, combined with forecasted population and employment growth in the Charleston region, will result in increased truck and overall traffic volumes passing through the I-526 and Long Point Road interchange.

Expanded discussion regarding the project needs is included in Chapter 2.2 of the Environmental Assessment (EA).

3.0 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The PEL Study identified four interchange concepts for the Long Point Road interchange; three of the four interchange concepts moved forward into the EA for further study and evaluation. The PEL Study Option 3 (Shipping Lane Option) did not move forward as a stand-alone alternative because of its similarities to other alternatives and because it did not provide the basic traffic movements required to improve the functionality of the interchange. Additionally, this option would require a new traffic signal along Long Point Road, creating an additional conflict between port-related and local traffic.

Three preliminary alternatives from the PEL Study were brought forward for consideration in the EA (PEL Option 1, 2, and 4). In addition, three additional interchange alternatives were developed by the project team. These alternatives include improvements to the existing Long Point Road interchange configuration, new interchange configuration, and/or a new interchange alternative.

Table 3.1 lists the preliminary range of alternatives evaluated to improve the Long Point Road interchange.

Table 3.1: Preliminary Range of Alternatives Considered

Universe of Alternatives	Description	Origin
No-Build	Includes improvements included in 2050 Existing and Committed (E+C) Network	2050 E+C Network
Alternative 1 (PEL Option 1)	Improved Partial Cloverleaf Interchange	I-526 LCC EAST PEL
Alternative 2 (PEL Option 2)	New Truck Ramps to the Port and Improved Partial Cloverleaf Interchange	I-526 LCC EAST PEL
Alternative 3 (PEL Option 4)	Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)	I-526 LCC EAST PEL
Alternative 4	Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)	Developed by Project Team
Alternative 5	Flyover from Long Point Road	Developed by Project Team
Alternative 6	New Truck Ramps to the Port and DDI	Developed by Project Team

3.1 ALTERNATIVES EVALUATION PROCESS

The No-Build Alternative and six conceptual build alternatives moved forward as stand-alone alternatives for detailed analysis.

The range of alternatives were evaluated to determine if they meet the purpose and need of the project using traffic models, including Highway Capacity Software (HCS), Synchro, SimTraffic, and VISSIM to determine how the six build alternatives performed compared to the No-Build Alternative. Detailed information on the data sets and traffic analysis models can be found in the Traffic Analysis Report/Interchange Access Request (Appendix A).

The six build alternatives were evaluated using the following two questions:

1. Does the alternative improve traffic operations compared to the No-Build Alternative?
2. Does the alternative reduce operational conflicts between port-related and local traffic compared with the No-Build Alternative?

Only the alternatives that could answer “yes” to both questions were considered to meet the purpose and need of the project and were carried forward as a Reasonable Alternative.

3.1.1 REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE

During the screening of the range of build alternatives, one alternative, Alternative 2, met the purpose and need for the project. Therefore, Alternative 2 was carried forward as the only Reasonable Alternative for further evaluation, see **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Identified Reasonable Alternatives

Conceptual Build Alternatives	Description	Improves Traffic Operation	Reduces Conflicts Between Port-Related and Local Traffic	Meets Purpose and Need	Considered Reasonable
Alternative 1	Improved Partial Cloverleaf Interchange	No	No	No	No
Alternative 2	New Truck Ramps to the Port and Improved Partial Cloverleaf Interchange	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alternative 3	DDI	No	No	No	No
Alternative 4	SPUI	No	No	No	No
Alternative 5	Flyover from Long Point Road	No	No	No	No
Alternative 6	New Port Access Ramps and DDI	No	Yes	No	No

Although the No-Build Alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project, it was carried forward in the evaluation of alternatives as a baseline comparison for environmental impacts. See Chapter 4 of the EA for a comparison of environmental impacts between the No-Build Alternative and the one Reasonable Alternative (Alternative 2). The No-Build Alternative and Reasonable Alternative (Alternative 2) are described below.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative provides a baseline for comparing potential benefits of the improvements while also examining the impacts between alternatives. Analysis of the No-Build Alternative considered the existing conditions as well as existing and committed (E+C) transportation projects for the design year 2050. The Traffic Analysis Report/Interchange Access Request (Appendix A) provides more information on the No-Build Alternative.

Alternative 2: New Truck Ramps to the Port and Improved Partial Cloverleaf Interchange

Alternative 2 provides new access to WWT for port-related traffic along with an improved partial cloverleaf interchange. CD roads are proposed to help separate port-related and local traffic. This alternative requires the realignment of a segment of Wando Park Boulevard to accommodate the new port-related truck ramps and CD roads. Alternative 2 provides improvements to geometric design, improved traffic operations, and additional truck access allowing port-related truck traffic direct access to the WWT, avoiding Long Point Road.

3.1.2 SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

The refined Reasonable Alternative (Alternative 2) was analyzed and compared to the No-Build Alternative for potential effects on the social, economic, and natural environments as well as the ability to meet the purpose and need of the project. **Table 3.3** outlines the potential environmental impacts for Reasonable Alternative (Alternative 2) as shown in the EA. Impacts are further described in Chapter 4.

Table 3.3: Potential Environmental Impacts

Resource	Description	No Build	Alternative 2
Meets Purpose and Need	Improves Traffic Operation	No	Yes
	Reduces Conflicts Between Port-Related and Local Traffic	No	Yes
Meets Projects Goals	Yes/No	No	Yes
Right-of-Way Required	Acreage	0	34
Right-of-Way Impacts	Parcels (Number of Tracts)	0	147
	Total Potential Relocations	0	54*
	Number of Residential	0	0
	Number of Businesses	0	51**
	Number of Churches	0	1
Cultural Resources	Number of Sites Eligible/Potentially Eligible for Listing on National Register of Historic Places	0	1
Hazardous Waste Sites	Parcels of Concern	0	7
Total Wetland Impacts	Acres	0	14.1 acres
Freshwater	Acres	0	9.4 acres
Critical Area	Acres	0	3.1 acres
Ponds	Acres	0	1.6 acres
Essential Fish Habitat	Acres	0	2.79 acres
Threatened and Endangered Species	No Effect (NE)/Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA)/May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect (LAA)	NE	NLAA
Preliminary Cost Estimate	US Dollars (2024)	0	\$280-360 million

**Total relocations include 2 outbuildings*

***Includes the cell tower (estimated as 5 businesses)*

Based on the evaluation of the Reasonable Alternative (Alternative 2) compared to the No-Build Alternative, it was determined that Alternative 2 provides improvements for traffic operations and would reduce conflicts between port-related traffic and local traffic. Alternative 2 was identified as the only alternative to meet the purpose and need of the project. Therefore, SCDOT and FHWA have identified Alternative 2 as the Selected Alternative, see **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1: Selected Alternative Rendering



The content of this display is conceptual only and not to be used for any type of construction, maintenance, or acquisition of right-of-way. As of February 2023.

3.2 REVISIONS SINCE APPROVAL OF THE EA

3.2.1 PROJECT DESIGN REVISIONS

Following the approval of the EA on March 15, 2023, and the completion of the public hearing public comment period, the project design was reviewed. Minor changes were incorporated into the project design including:

- The addition of a mountable concrete median on Long Point Road to separate eastbound Long Point Road traffic from traffic using the northbound on-ramp to I-526.
- The revision of the alignment of Wando Park Boulevard to reduce the length of reconstruction by approximately 860 feet, eliminating reconstruction between the eGroup entrance and the Wando Commons entrance.
- The design of Noise Wall 9 was modified based on comments received during the balloting process. A 2,720-foot-long barrier with an area of 64,198 square feet was found to be effective. The area per benefitted receptor is 1,427 square feet and will reduce the noise level by 5 to 11 dB(A) for 45 residences. Refer to Section 4.8 for additional information on the modification of Noise Wall 9.

The design modifications did not result in any increase to impacts from the project. For more information on the impacts by resource, see Chapter 4.

3.2.2 FISCAL CONSTRAINT UPDATES

The CHATS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2024-2033⁵ was adopted on February 12, 2024, and lists a total project cost of \$225 million. The SCDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 2021-2027⁶ was updated on July 30, 2024, and lists a STIP cost of \$207 million with a remaining cost of \$89 million.

3.2.3 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES UPDATES

On November 30, 2022, USFWS published a final rule in the Federal Register (87 FR 73488) to reclassify the northern long-eared bat as endangered. USFWS's change to the rule became effective on March 31, 2023.⁷ Consultation with USFWS was reinitiated on August 9, 2023, for the northern long-eared bat listing change. The not likely to adversely affect determination in the EA did not change considering the listing change. Concurrence from USFWS was received on August 10, 2023.

On July 24, 2024, an addendum to the Biological Evaluation provided an updated northern long-eared bat evaluation. Updated Determination Keys (Dkey) were used to determine the project's potential impacts on Northern Long-eared Bats (NLEB, *Myotis septentrionalis*). The Dkey stated that the project is not likely to result in unauthorized takes of northern long-eared bats and the proposed project is consistent with a determination of "May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect" the northern long-eared bat.

⁵ https://bcdcg.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-2033-TIP_Adopted_02.12.2024.pdf

⁶ http://dbwapps.scdot.org/ESTIP/downloads/Charleston.html?_id=1723223875370

⁷ <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2023-01/effective-date-reclassify-northern-long-eared-bat-endangered-extended#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Fish%20and%20Wildlife,%2C%20to%20March%2031%2C%202023>. Accessed January 31, 2023.

Through coordination with USFWS and SCDNR, it has been determined that potential impacts to bat species can be minimized if tree-clearing restrictions are adhered to. Tree-clearing restrictions would take place between April 1 through July 31 and December 15 through February 15.

3.2.4 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT REVISIONS

Table 3.4: Environmental Commitment Revisions Since Approval of the EA

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Community – Transportation and Traffic	<p>SCDOT and the contractor would coordinate with emergency service providers such as police, fire protection, and ambulance services prior to the start of construction to ensure access for emergency vehicles would be maintained.</p> <p>A maintenance-of-traffic plan would be developed to outline measures to minimize construction impacts on transportation and traffic. To the extent possible, the plan would require access to existing residential and commercial areas be maintained and existing roads be kept open unless an alternate route can be provided.</p>	SCDOT and the contractor will coordinate with emergency service providers such as police, fire protection, and ambulance services prior to the start of construction to maintain access for emergency vehicles.	Maintenance-of-traffic plans are standard SCDOT specifications.
Environmental Justice	During public involvement activities, including after the public hearing, SCDOT will continue to engage environmental justice communities and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations to get their input and provide meaningful engagement and identify their needs as it pertains to this project.	Removed.	As stated in Section 4.3, it is not expected that relocations would impact environmental justice populations. No minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be adversely impacted by the Selected Alternative. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of EO 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23A, no further environmental justice analysis is required.

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Air Quality	<p>The contractor(s) will ensure particulate matter emissions will be minimized by using fugitive dust control measures such as covering or treating disturbed areas with dust suppression techniques, sprinkling, covering loaded trucks, and other dust abatement controls, as appropriate. Construction-related Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) emissions will be minimized by using low emission diesel fuel for non-road diesel construction equipment. Provisions will be included in project plans and specifications requiring contractors to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction air quality impacts through abatement measures such as limiting construction equipment idling and other emission limitation techniques, as appropriate.</p> <p>The contractor(s) will ensure that all construction equipment is properly tuned and maintained. Idling time will be minimized to save fuel and reduce emissions. Water will be applied to control dust impacts off site. There will be no open burning of removed vegetation.</p>	<p>The contractor(s) will ensure particulate matter emissions will be minimized by using appropriate fugitive dust control measures. Construction-related Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) emissions will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Provisions will be included in project plans and specifications requiring contractors to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction air quality impacts through abatement measures, as appropriate.</p> <p>The contractor(s) will ensure that all construction equipment is properly tuned and maintained. Idling time will be minimized to save fuel and reduce emissions. There will be no open burning of removed vegetation.</p>	<p>The environmental commitment as written in the EA was too prescriptive mandating contractor means and methods.</p>

Noise	<p>SCDOT will develop a public relations plan addressing notices to be sent to the public for updates or notifications regarding schedule, upcoming construction activities, and potential temporary impacts (e.g. noise, traffic shifts, etc.). This information will be used to prepare the drafting of public notices that may be used by SCDOT's communications office and other methods and means of notification as outlined in the public relations plan. Timeframes for notification and updates shall be included in the plan and may require approval from the RCE.</p> <p>The Contractor shall follow SCDOT construction standard procedure as defined in SCDOT Construction Manual and Standards and Specifications.</p> <p>A total of 4 noise barriers were determined to be feasible and reasonable and recommended as mitigation of traffic noise for the Recommended Preferred Alternative. A detailed description of the noise barrier locations and/or noise abatement measures are presented in the Noise Analysis Report (Appendix E).</p> <p>Based on the studies thus far accomplished, SCDOT intends to install highway traffic noise abatement measures in the form of four noise barriers. These preliminary indications of likely abatement measures are based upon preliminary design.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise Wall 1a/3/6/8 is located north of I-526 and west of Long Point Road between the Wando River bridge and Belle Hall Parkway. The barrier has an area of 798 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 8 dB(A) for 277 residences and 1 pool. • Noise Wall NW 2a/4 is located south of I-526 between the Wando River bridge and Ridge Road. The barrier has an area of 339 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 8 dB(A) for 197 residences and 1 pool. • Noise Wall 9 is located south of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Lone Tree Drive and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek. The barrier has an area of 1,080 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise 	<p>SCDOT will develop a public relations plan addressing notices to be sent to the public for updates and notifications regarding schedule, upcoming construction activities, and potential temporary impacts (e.g., noise, traffic shifts, etc.). The public relations plan will be used to prepare the public notices that will be used by SCDOT's communications office and other methods and means of notification as outlined in the public relations plan. Timeframes for notification and updates shall be included in the public relations plan and may require approval from the Resident Construction Engineer (RCE).</p> <p>The contractor shall follow SCDOT construction standard procedure as defined in SCDOT Construction Manual and Standards and Specifications.</p> <p>A total of four noise barriers were determined to be feasible and reasonable and recommended as mitigation of traffic noise for the Preferred Alternative. A detailed description of the noise barrier locations and/or noise abatement measures are presented in the Noise Analysis Report (Appendix E).</p> <p>Based on studies completed to date, SCDOT intends to install highway traffic noise abatement measures in the form of four noise barriers. These preliminary abatement measures are based upon preliminary design. The noise abatement walls are identified in the Noise Analysis Report are Noise Wall 1a/3/6/8 (located north of I-526 and west of Long Point Road between the Wando River bridge and Belle Hall Parkway); Noise Wall NW 2a/4 (located south of I-526 between the Wando River bridge and Ridge Road); Noise Wall 9 (located south of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Lone Tree Drive and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek); and Noise Wall 12 (located north of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Long Point Road and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek).</p> <p>The noise barriers above were determined to be feasible and reasonable in the report and shall be constructed by the CONTRACTOR. A final confirmation of the configuration, placement and installation of the abatement measures will be made upon completion of the project's final design and final noise analysis completed by the CONTRACTOR.</p> <p>To minimize future traffic noise impacts on currently undeveloped lands of Type I projects, per 23 CFR 772.17 SCDOT shall inform local officials by providing a copy of</p>	<p>Reworded statement regarding the public relations plan for clarity.</p> <p>Noise wall design is subject to change during final design. The heights, lengths, and square footages may change based on final dimensions.</p>
-------	---	--	---

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
	<p>level by an average of 7 dB(A) for 81 residences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise Wall 12 is located north of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Long Point Road and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek. The barrier has an area of 313 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 10 dB(A) for 153 residences, 1 pool, and 1 picnic area. <p>If it subsequently develops during final design that these conditions have substantially changed, the abatement measures might not be provided. A final decision of the installation of the abatement measure(s) will be made upon completion of the project's design and the public involvement processes.</p> <p>To minimize future traffic noise impacts on currently undeveloped lands of Type I projects, SCDOT shall inform local officials by providing a copy of the noise analysis within whose jurisdiction the highway project is located in, per 23 CFR 772.17.</p>	<p>the noise analysis within whose jurisdiction the proposed highway project is located.</p>	
Stormwater	<p>Stormwater control measures, both during construction and post-construction, are required for SCDOT projects with land disturbance and/or constructed in the vicinity of 303(d), TMDL, ORW, tidal, and other sensitive waters in accordance with the SCDOT's MS4 Permit. The selected contractor would be required to minimize potential stormwater impacts through implementation of construction BMPs, reflecting policies contained in 23 CFR 650 B and SCDOT's Supplemental Specifications on Seed and Erosion Control Measures (latest edition).</p>	<p>Stormwater control measures, both during construction and post-construction, are required for SCDOT projects with land disturbance and/or constructed in the vicinity of 303(d), total maximum daily load (TMDL), outstanding resource water (ORW), tidal, and other sensitive waters in accordance with SCDOT's MS4 Permit. The selected contractor would be required to minimize potential stormwater impacts through implementation of construction BMPs, reflecting policies contained in 23 CFR 650 B and SCDOT's Supplemental Specifications on Seed and Erosion Control Measures (latest edition).</p>	<p>Spelled out acronyms for total maximum daily load (TMDL) and outstanding resource water (ORW)</p>
Wetlands	<p>The clearing, grading, or placement of fill in wetlands will require authorization from USACE and SCDHEC. The limits of any clearing, grading, or fill in wetlands will be delineated and shown on approved permitted plans by USACE and SCDHEC. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with all applicable permits and permit conditions for the placement of fill in wetlands. Compensatory mitigation would be required to offset unavoidable losses of WOTUS per USACE requirements.</p>	<p>The limits of any clearing, grading, or fill in wetlands will be delineated and shown on approved permitted plans by USACE and SCDES. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with all applicable permits and permit conditions for the placement of fill in wetlands. Compensatory mitigation would be required to offset unavoidable losses of Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) per USACE requirements.</p>	<p>Removed first sentence from EA commitment.</p> <p>Spelled out acronym for Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS).</p> <p>Revised SCDHEC to SCDES due to agency name change.</p>

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Individual Permit	Impacts to jurisdictional waters will be permitted under a Department of the Army Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. SCDOT will provide the Army Corps with information regarding any proposed demolition activities during the Section 404 permitting process. The required mitigation for this project will be determined through consultation with the USACE and other resource agencies.	Impacts to jurisdictional waters will be permitted under a Department of the Army Section 404 permit from the USACE. For impacts to freshwater wetlands, SCDOT plans to purchase credits from an USACE approved Mitigation Bank. The specific bank to purchase Salt Marsh credits for those impacts in the critical area has not been identified, however the Department commits to purchasing these credits from an USACE approved mitigation bank.	Revised to clarify SCDOT will commit to the purchase of required mitigation credits from an USACE approved Mitigation Bank.
Floodplains	The Engineer of Record will send a set of preliminary plans and request for floodplain management compliance to the local County Floodplain Administrator.	The Engineer of Record will send a set of preliminary final plans and request for floodplain management compliance to Charleston County's Floodplain Administrator.	Revised from "preliminary" to "final" to match standard SCDOT commitment language.
Floodplains	Hydraulic and hydrologic studies would be completed by the contractor on the Recommended Preferred Alternative during the final design phase of the project. Bridge structures would be designed per FEMA standards. Detailed hydrology studies have not yet been conducted at this stage of project development; however, the project would be designed in an effort to meet "No-Rise" requirements. A No-Rise Certification would be required from FEMA to ensure that any proposed structure would result in less than 1-foot increase in flood elevations. Pursuant to the FEMA certification, the project would be designed to allow for no more than 1-foot increase in flood elevations. In the event a "No-Rise" condition cannot be achieved, coordination with FEMA will require the preparation of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR)/Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) package for the encroachment. This includes a detailed hydraulic analysis, determination of floodplain impacts, and preparation of the CLOMR. Following construction, impacts to the floodplain would be verified prior to the issuance of the LOMR.	Hydraulic and hydrologic studies will be completed by the contractor on the Preferred Alternative during the final design phase of the project. Bridge structures will be designed per FEMA standards. The project will be designed in an effort to meet "No-Rise" requirements. Pursuant to the FEMA certification, the project will be designed to allow for no more than 1-foot increase in flood elevations. In the event a "No-Rise" condition cannot be achieved, coordination with FEMA will require the preparation of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR)/Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) package for the encroachment.	Revised to "Preferred Alternative". The commitment as written in the EA already described standard SCDOT practice.

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Threatened and Endangered Species – All species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The contractor will develop a SWPPP and obtain an NPDES permit from SCDHEC before construction can commence. •The contractor will adhere to all SCDOT construction and erosion and sediment control BMPs. •The limits of any clearing, grading, or fill in wetlands will be delineated and shown on approved permitted plans by USACE, SCDHEC, and OCRM. The contractor will comply with all applicable permits and permit conditions for the placement of fill in wetlands. •If existing permitted borrow sites are not available, the contractor will be required to follow SCDOT guidance in Engineering Directive Memorandum 30 (ED-30), Borrow Pit Location and Monitoring. The contractor will be responsible for addressing the potential effects to federally listed threatened and endangered species for any new borrow or disposal sites. •The final design will meet the conditions of SCDOT's General MS4 permit and TMDL guidance in the SCDOT's Stormwater Quality Design Manual. •SCDOT and contractor will be required to stay in compliance with all approved environmental conditions and any special conditions established in the required permit authorizations. •Consultation with USFWS will be reinitiated when new rule and listing status becomes effective for the Northern long-eared bat (NLEB). •Consultation with USFWS will be reinitiated when new rule and listing status becomes effective for the tricolored bat. •Temporary lighting during bridge construction and improvements would be directed away from suitable habitat during the active season of northern long-eared bat and other bat species. •To the extent practicable, tree removal would not exceed what is required for project construction (alignments and temporary work areas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consultation with USFWS will be reinitiated if/when new rule and listing designation goes into effect for any species. •Temporary lighting during bridge construction and improvements will be directed away from suitable bat habitat during the active season (March 1st through November 15th) of the northern long-eared bat and other bat species. March 1st through November 15th is the time frame when bats are considered most active in the coastal plain. •To the extent practicable, tree removal will not exceed what is required for project construction (Preferred Alternative alignment and temporary work areas). Tree-clearing restrictions would take place between April 1st through July 31st and December 15th through February 15th. 	<p>Overlapping commitments and commitments that are associated with standard regulatory requirements were removed.</p> <p>Commitments specific to reinitiate consultation with USFWS for specific species were revised to cover any species with a listing status change.</p> <p>Specific timeframes for bat-related commitments were added for clarity.</p> <p>Consolidated Threatened and Endangered Species – Bat species commitments with Threatened and Endangered Species – All species.</p>

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Migratory Bird Treaty Act	<p>The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 USC § 703-711, states that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer to or sell, barter, purchase, deliver or cause to be shipped, exported, imported, transported, carried or received any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not. The SCDOT will comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 in regard to the avoidance of taking of individual migratory birds and the destruction of their active nests.</p> <p>The contractor shall notify the RCE at least four (4) weeks prior to construction/demolition/maintenance of bridges and box culverts. The RCE will coordinate with SCDOT Environmental Services Office (ESO), Compliance Division, to determine if there are any active birds using the structure. After this coordination, it will be determined when construction/demolition/maintenance can begin. If a nest is observed that was not discovered after construction/demolition/maintenance has begun, the contractor will cease work and immediately notify the RCE, who will notify the ESO Compliance Division. The ESO Compliance Division will determine the next course of action.</p> <p>The use of any deterrents by the contractor designed to prevent birds from nesting, shall be approved by the RCE with coordination from the ESO Compliance Division. The cost for any contractor provided deterrents will be provided at no additional cost to SCDOT.</p>	<p>The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 USC § 703-711, states that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer to or sell, barter, purchase, deliver or cause to be shipped, exported, imported, transported, carried or received any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not. SCDOT will comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 in regard to the avoidance of taking of individual migratory birds and the destruction of their active nests.</p> <p>The contractor shall notify the RCE at least four (4) weeks prior to construction/demolition/maintenance of bridges and box culverts. The RCE will coordinate with SCDOT's Environmental Services Office (ESO), Compliance Division, to determine if there are any active birds using the structure. After coordination, it will be determined when construction/demolition/maintenance can begin. If a nest is observed that was not discovered after construction/demolition/maintenance has begun, the contractor will cease work and immediately notify the RCE, who will notify SCDOT's ESO Compliance Division. The ESO Compliance Division will determine the next course of action.</p> <p>The use of any deterrents by the contractor designed to prevent birds from nesting, shall be approved by the RCE with coordination from the ESO Compliance Division. The cost for any contractor provided deterrents will be provided at no additional cost to SCDOT.</p>	<p>Removed "The" before SCDOT in the last sentence of the first paragraph.</p>

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Essential Fish Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Temporary silt/turbidity curtains will be installed prior to the commencement of in-water work, where practicable. The contractor will be required to utilize SCDOT BMPs for soil and erosion control during construction. •For construction activities associated with the two bridges over the unnamed tributary to Rathall Creek, which may include the widening of shoulders and bridge structures, no temporary or permanent piles will be placed in the channel of the creek. •The selected contractor will be required to minimize impacts of siltation and erosion through implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). •SCDOT, FHWA, and the contractor will develop the mitigation plan in coordination with the appropriate resource agencies. A final mitigation plan will be developed for the 404/401 permit and will include consideration for impacts to EFH as part of that plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Temporary silt/turbidity curtains will be installed prior to the commencement of in-water work, where practicable. The contractor will be required to utilize SCDOT BMPs for soil and erosion control during construction. •For construction activities associated with the two bridges over the unnamed tributary to Rathall Creek, which may include the widening of shoulders and bridge structures, no temporary or permanent piles will be placed in the channel of the creek. •The Contractor will be required to minimize impacts of siltation and erosion through implementation of BMPs. •SCDOT, FHWA, and the contractor will develop the mitigation plan in coordination with the appropriate resource agencies. A final mitigation plan will be developed for the 404/401 permit and will include consideration for impacts to essential fish habitat as part of that plan. 	Removed “selected” and used the abbreviation for BMP.
Hazardous Materials	<p>SCDOT will ensure that hazardous materials sites are avoided where practicable or sufficiently remediated so that the public would not be exposed to health risk. Contractors will follow SCDOT's Standard Specifications, which include provisions to protect the health and safety of persons in the proximity of construction and staging sites. Lead and asbestos testing would be conducted prior to construction to ensure that these materials are handled appropriately.</p> <p>If avoidance of hazardous materials is not a viable alternative and soils that appear to be contaminated are encountered during construction, SCDHEC will be informed immediately. Hazardous materials will be tested and removed and/or treated in accordance with the EPA and SCDHEC requirements, if necessary. SCDHEC Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal compliance staff can be contacted at 803-898-0290.</p>	<p>SCDOT will avoid hazardous materials sites where practicable or sufficiently remediate so that the public will not be exposed to potential health risks. The contractor(s) will follow SCDOT's Standard Specifications, which include provisions to protect the health and safety of persons in the proximity of construction and staging sites. Lead and asbestos testing would be conducted prior to construction to ensure that materials are handled appropriately.</p> <p>If avoidance of hazardous materials is not a viable alternative and soils that appear to be contaminated are encountered during construction, SCDES will be informed immediately. Hazardous materials will be tested and removed and/or treated in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and SCDES requirements. SCDES Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage, and Disposal compliance staff can be contacted at 803-898-0290.</p>	<p>Reworded the first sentence for clarity.</p> <p>Merged the two EA commitments into one commitment since both discussed avoidance and testing.</p> <p>Revised SCDHEC to SCDES due to agency name change.</p>

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Hazardous Materials	<p>Any properties partially or wholly acquired for this project or where construction would occur may require further inspection and assessment. Prior to right-of-way acquisition or construction impacts by the project, additional field investigations may be necessary at the parcels of concern. During the hazardous materials evaluation, field observations in the parcels of concern was not possible due to access restrictions of privately owned property. Therefore, identifying the spatial locations of potential hazardous materials within a given parcel was not possible. Prior to conducting any Phase II investigations, further evaluations in the field should be conducted to locate potential hazardous materials on a parcel and then position Phase II investigatory sampling locations accordingly. A Phase II will be required on parcels within or with the potential to affect parcels within the project footprint, as identified in the Phase I report. Parcels of concern and recommended soil and groundwater sampling are presented in the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey (Appendix L). These are preliminary sampling recommendations that may change in frequency and laboratory analysis based on future field investigations. Sampling should follow applicable SCDHEC environmental standard operating procedures.</p>	<p>Prior to right-of-way acquisition or construction activities, additional field investigations may be required at parcels of concern identified during the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey. Seven parcels of concern were identified and recommended for further investigation prior to land disturbance or ROW activities. A Phase II Assessment will be required on each of the parcels of concern with the potential to be affected by activities within the project footprint. The list of parcels of concern and recommended soil and groundwater sampling are presented in the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey (Appendix L). Sampling shall follow applicable SCDHEC environmental standard operating procedures.</p> <p>Any right-of-way acquisition or construction activities occurring on parcels not evaluated in the Hazardous Materials/Waste Survey must complete an analysis to determine potential for Hazardous Materials/Waste. This shall include a review of available state and federal environmental records to obtain information regarding any past or current hazardous waste disposal sites, reported petroleum or hazardous waste releases, listed hazardous waste generation, transportation, storage, or disposal facilities, listed solid waste disposal facilities, and other issues related to reported environmental contamination problems. If additional parcels of concern are identified, and are to be impacted, a Phase II Assessment will be needed.</p>	<p>Revised to provide clarity moving into the design-build procurement process.</p>

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
Cultural Resources	<p>During the construction phase of the project, the contractor and subcontractors must notify their workers to watch for the presence of any prehistoric or historic remains, including but not limited to arrowheads, pottery, ceramics, flakes, bones, graves, gravestones, or brick concentrations. If any such remains are encountered, the Resident Construction Engineer will be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials and site work shall cease until the SCDOT Archaeologist directs otherwise.</p> <p>If unanticipated cultural materials (for example, large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the resident construction engineer (RCE) will be immediately notified and all work near the discovered materials will cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office (CIN-THPO).</p>	<p>During construction, the contractor and subcontractors must notify their workers to watch for the presence of any prehistoric or historic remains, including but not limited to arrowheads, pottery, ceramics, flakes, bones, graves, gravestones, or brick concentrations. If any such remains are encountered, the RCE will be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials and site work shall cease until the SCDOT Archaeologist directs otherwise.</p> <p>If unanticipated cultural materials (for example, large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the resident construction engineer (RCE) will be immediately notified and all work near the discovered materials will cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Catawba Indian Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office (CIN-THPO).</p>	<p>Revised first sentence for clarity.</p> <p>Used abbreviation for RCE.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>The proposed changes will have an adverse effect on the archaeological site 38CH2683. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with the memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the site in coordination with the SHPO, the SCDOT, the FHWA, and all other relevant stakeholders. The MOA outlines a mitigation strategy for site 38CH2683, including archaeological data recovery investigations and public information components, taking into consideration the research design as well as the results for a 2022 College of Charleston archaeological investigation taking place at the time of the survey.</p>	<p>The Preferred Alternative will result in an adverse effect on the archaeological site 38CH2683. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with the memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the site in coordination with SHPO, SCDOT, FHWA, and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Removed last sentence to provide clarity moving into the design-build procurement process.</p>

<p>Cultural Resources - MOA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCDOT's archaeological consultant, or staff, will develop a treatment plan for data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The treatment plan will include a description of the project's research design and sampling strategy. The treatment plan will be submitted to the South Carolina SHPO for review and approval prior to any fieldwork. The South Carolina SHPO will make a reasonable effort to review the treatment plan(s) no later than thirty days after receipt. All archaeological and historical investigation will be carried out by professionals who meet Secretary of the Interior's qualifications. • All plans and reports developed for the treatment of Archaeological Site 38CH2683 shall incorporate guidance from the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation" (48 FR 44734-37) and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication, Treatment of Archaeological Properties (ACHP 1980). In addition, these materials will be consistent with South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). • At least one on-site (or virtual) meeting between the SCDOT, the FHWA, and the South Carolina SHPO will take place during field investigations in order to discuss any necessary revisions to the original scope of work. Any revisions made to the original scope of work will be attached to the approved treatment plan and this agreement. • A draft technical report of data recovery investigations will be submitted to the South Carolina SHPO for review and approval within twelve (12) months from the last day of fieldwork. The draft technical report will be consistent with the standards outlined in South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). The South Carolina SHPO reserves the right to submit the draft technical report to qualified professional archaeologists for the purpose of peer review. • Within three (3) months of the draft report approval, SCDOT will provide one bound copy and one Portable Document Format (PDF) for the SHPO and two bound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCDOT's archaeological consultant, or staff, will develop a treatment plan for data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The treatment plan will include a description of the project's research design and sampling strategy. The treatment plan will be submitted to SHPO for review and approval prior to any fieldwork. The SHPO will make a reasonable effort to review the treatment plan(s) no later than thirty days after receipt. All archaeological and historical investigation will be carried out by professionals who meet Secretary of the Interior's qualifications. • All plans and reports developed for the treatment of Archaeological Site 38CH2683 shall incorporate guidance from the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation" (48 FR 44734-37) and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation publication, Treatment of Archaeological Properties (ACHP 1980). In addition, these materials will be consistent with South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). • At least one on-site (or virtual) meeting between the SCDOT, FHWA, and SHPO will take place during field investigations in order to discuss any necessary revisions to the original scope of work. Any revisions made to the original scope of work will be attached to the approved treatment plan and this agreement. • A draft technical report of data recovery investigations will be submitted to the SHPO for review and approval within twelve (12) months from the last day of fieldwork. The draft technical report will be consistent with the standards outlined in South Carolina Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations (2013). The SHPO reserves the right to submit the draft technical report to qualified professional archaeologists for the purpose of peer review. • Within three months of the draft report approval, SCDOT will provide one bound copy and one digital copy for SHPO and two bound copies and one PDF copy of the final technical report for the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). The PDF file will be developed according to the specifications and requirements of the SHPO. A separate digital abstract from the report (in Word or html format) will also be provided to SHPO. The abstract file can be provided on the same CD as the PDF file. • SCDOT will ensure that all artifacts recovered during archaeological 	<p>Merged the last commitment regarding the MOA summary report into the bulleted list of MOA commitments.</p>
---------------------------------	---	---	---

Topic	Environmental Commitment from the EA	Revised Environmental Commitment in the FONSI	Rationale for Revision
	<p>copies and one PDF copy of the final technical report for the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA). The PDF file will be developed according to the specifications and requirements of the SHPO. A separate digital abstract from the report (in Word or html format) will also be provided to the SHPO. The abstract file can be provided on the same CD as the PDF file.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCDOT will ensure that all artifacts recovered during archaeological investigations are stabilized and processed for curation at the SCIAA. SCDOT will notify the SHPO when artifacts have been given over to SCIAA for curation. • The SCDOT shall develop a public education component related to the data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The SCDOT shall submit a plan for the public education component to the South Carolina SHPO within six months of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. The SCDOT shall implement plan for developing public materials within two years of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. • If unanticipated cultural materials (e.g., large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the Resident Construction Engineer shall be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials shall cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with the South Carolina SHPO. <p>Each year following the execution of this MOA until it expires or is terminated, the SCDOT shall provide all parties to this MOA a summary report detailing work carried out pursuant to its terms. Such report shall include any scheduling changes proposed, any problems encountered, and any disputes and objections received in FHWA's and SCDOT's efforts to carry out the terms of this MOA.</p>	<p>investigations are stabilized and processed for curation at the SCIAA. SCDOT will notify SHPO when artifacts have been given over to SCIAA for curation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SCDOT shall develop a public education component related to the data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. SCDOT shall submit a plan for the public education component to SHPO within six months of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. SCDOT shall implement a plan for developing public materials within two years of completing data recovery investigations at Archaeological Site 38CH2683. •If unanticipated cultural materials (e.g., large, intact artifacts or animal bones; large soils stains or patterns of soil stains; buried brick or stone structures; clusters of brick or stone) or human skeletal remains are discovered during construction activities, then the Resident Construction Engineer shall be immediately notified and all work in the vicinity of the discovered materials shall cease until an evaluation can be made by the SCDOT archaeologist in consultation with SHPO. •Each year following the execution of this MOA until it expires or is terminated, the SCDOT shall provide all parties to this MOA a summary report detailing work carried out pursuant to its terms. Such report shall include any scheduling changes proposed, any problems encountered, and any disputes and objections received in FHWA's and SCDOT's efforts to carry out the terms of this MOA. 	

The Long Point Road interchange project is expected to be delivered through either the design-build process or an alternative project delivery method where final design plans and construction methods are determined by the design-build contractor and SCDOT. Revisions to the project may occur as final design plans and construction methods are finalized.

4.0 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS RELATED TO THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

This chapter identifies the environmental impacts that would occur as a result of the construction of the Selected Alternative. A comprehensive analysis occurred for all environmental resources, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and is documented in Chapter 4 of the EA.

4.1 LAND USE

The Selected Alternative was reviewed against existing land uses and planning documents including the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan (2017), the Town of Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan (2020), and the Town of Mount Pleasant's Comprehensive Plan and Port District Economic Development Plan (2017). The Selected Alternative would result in minimal changes to existing land uses by converting existing commercial, undeveloped, institutional, and residential land uses to transportation right-of-way. The Selected Alternative would be consistent with current zoning regulations and would be consistent with the needs identified in the Town of Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan.

4.2 FARMLANDS

Farmlands were reviewed in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981. The Selected Alternative is located within an urban area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.⁸ Therefore, there would be no impact to protected farmlands.

4.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

All federal agencies must comply with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Executive Order (EO) 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. Under Title VI and related statutes, each federal agency is required to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability, or religion. EO 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, signed by the President on February 11, 1994, directs Federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income

⁸ https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/UAUC_RefMap/ua/ua15508_charleston--north_charleston_sc/DC10UA15508.pdf

populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. Additional details on regulations regarding environmental justice can be found in Chapter 4 of the EA.

The EJ analysis was performed in accordance with EO 12898 (*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice to Minority and Low-Income Populations*), EO 14096 (*Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All*), US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Order 5610.2(c) (*Final Order to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*), FHWA EJ Order 6640.23A (*FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*), and FHWA's *Guidance on Environmental Justice and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)*.

The Selected Alternative intersects or is adjacent to six census block groups, four of which have been identified as environmental justice block groups (i.e., have a higher percent of minority or low-income population than the study area). The business relocations required by the Selected Alternative are located within an environmental justice block group. While the impacted businesses are part of the Town of Mount Pleasant's economic base, none of the businesses being relocated are anticipated to provide community dependent services (i.e., rely on being located within the community to function nor is the community dependent upon the business, for example a corner market or health care facility). The businesses in this area are not dependent on foot-traffic for access or sales, and no residential relocations would occur. Therefore, it is not expected that relocations would impact environmental justice populations. No minority or low-income populations have been identified that would be adversely impacted by the Selected Alternative, as determined above. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of EO 12898 and FHWA Order 6640.23A, no further environmental justice analysis is required.

Benefits from the Selected Alternative including more direct routing for truck traffic and associated air quality improvements would affect all populations in proximity to the project, including environmental justice populations. In addition, a 10-foot multiuse path is proposed along the east side of Long Point Road from Wando Park Boulevard to Belle Point Drive to enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

4.4 VISUAL RESOURCES

FHWA published guidelines for analyzing visual impacts of Highway Projects in January 2015.⁹ The guidelines begin with a scoping process to highlight visual resource issues and determine the appropriate level of study for compliance with NEPA. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Memorandum was deemed the appropriate level of analysis for this project, see Appendix C.

The area of visual effect (AVE) is a developed area with large industrial (e.g., WWT) and commercial buildings and large-scale transportation infrastructure, interspersed with residential areas enclosed by dense (tree canopy of 50 feet or greater) tree cover. Adjacent to the Wando River and Hobcaw Creek, estuarine and marine wetland areas are present.

The Selected Alternative would predominantly be compatible with the existing developed character of the AVE. The Selected Alternative would be similar in size, scale, color, and texture to existing roadways. Most improvements would be at existing grade, avoiding impacts to views outside of viewers actively using I-526 or Long Point Road. The Selected Alternative would predominantly be built within existing right-of-way. Although vegetation would be removed from within the right-of-way, the majority of the

⁹ https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/other_topics/VIA_Guidelines_for_Highway_Projects.aspx

heavy vegetation is located outside of the right-of-way and would not be impacted. Most residences, commercial buildings, and industrial facilities would be buffered from the Selected Alternative by existing tree cover. No roadway lighting is expected as part of the Selected Alternative, minimizing viewer sensitivity during non-daylight hours. Travelers on I-526, Long Point Road, Wando Park Boulevard, and Seacoast Parkway would be able to see changes while using these roadways. However, views would be of short duration and travelers would routinely use these roadways, minimizing the attention paid and focus on visual changes. Viewers within the AVE would predominantly be insensitive to changes. Visual impacts from the Selected Alternative would predominantly be neutral.

Localized adverse impacts would occur for residents directly adjacent to the proposed westbound entrance ramp overpass onto I-526 (i.e., southeast portion of Tidal Walk and Grassy Creek neighborhoods, southwest portion of the Belle Hall Plantation). The Selected Alternative would not be buffered from view by tree cover and skyline views would be obstructed by the elevated ramps, see **Figure 4.1**. Headlights from traffic using the overpass would be a new source of lighting; however, traffic volumes are not expected to increase and more direct routing for truck traffic as a result of the Selected Alternative could reduce the overall impact of headlights in the study area.

Figure 4.1: Existing View (left) and Proposed View (right) at Intersection of Wando Park Boulevard and Eighty Oak Avenue (Entrance to River Oaks Apartments)



Public comments received from nearby residences indicated concern about impacts to views from the Selected Alternative. To mitigate these potential impacts, the design was modified to shift the proposed overpass ramps approximately 1,000 feet to the east to provide the greatest distance between residences and the overpass and avoid and minimize visual impacts between residences and the Selected Alternative. Noise walls are proposed adjacent to residential areas and would serve as an additional buffer. Although the design, size, and location of noise walls is still to be determined, it is feasible to enhance the aesthetics of the walls to minimize impacts. No policies have been put in place requiring roadway lighting, and the current facility is not illuminated. If lighting is incorporated into the project, the lighting design would require considering impacts on the surrounding land uses and minimizing impacts, if possible. No additional mitigation is proposed at this time.

4.5 RELOCATIONS

Relocations occur when a project directly affects a home or business, requiring purchase of the property. The Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act)¹⁰ requires that just compensation be paid to the owner of private property taken for public use, without discrimination. The appraisal of fair market value is the basis of determining just compensation to be offered to the owner for the property to be acquired. Assistance will be provided to those being relocated as a result of the project in accordance with the Uniform Act.

The Selected Alternative is surrounded by residences, business parks, retail stores, industrial facilities, and the WWT. The Selected Alternative would not require any residential relocations; however, it would require the relocation of ten buildings, including six multi-tenant commercial buildings, four single-tenant commercial buildings, and a cell phone tower with four tenants (five relocations), resulting in 52 business relocations (includes one church relocation). Approximately 30 businesses and one church (the Christ Church Presbyterian) are estimated to occupy the 52 business relocations (includes one church).

Table 4.1 provides additional detail.

Table 4.1: Relocations

Address	Buildings	Total Units	Occupied Units	Businesses	Tenure ¹	Relocations
449 Long Point Road	2	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Intermodal Services Inc. 	Owner-occupied	1
482 Wando Park Boulevard	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eGroup 	Renter-occupied	2
478 Wando Park Boulevard	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CH Powell Company Tandem Global Logistics 	Owner- and Renter-occupied	2
503 Wando Park Boulevard	1	6	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prudential Walker Allen Trial Attorneys Sourcenet Medical Billing Associates 	Renter-occupied	7
474 Wando Park Boulevard	1	14	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unified Terminal Services James Doran Company/Humanities Foundation² Star LLC Long Point Counseling LLC Cooper Law Firm LLC THS Construction Inc. Premiere Automation LLC Hussey Gay Bell Golfbreaks by PGA Tour WSB Retail Partners Guaranteed Rate 	Renter-occupied	15
455 Long Point Road	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Palmetto Environmental Services Tapio School of Dance-Gymnastics 	Renter-occupied	3

¹⁰ As amended (P.L. 91-646, as amended by 100-17; 49 CFR 24.205 A–F)

Address	Buildings	Total Units	Occupied Units	Businesses	Tenure ¹	Relocations
443 Long Point Road	1	8	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Towne Heating & Air • SBA Inc. • 5 Stars Roofing • Carolina Builders & Reconstruction • Graphically Speaking Inc. • Palmetto State Steel Co. • East Cooper Custom Motorcycles 	Renter-occupied	9
486 Wando Park Boulevard	1	1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ Church Presbyterian 	Renter-occupied	2 ³
Cell Phone Tower NE of Shipping Lane	1	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown tenants 	Owner- and Renter-occupied	5
462 Wando Park Boulevard	1	5 ⁴	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lloyd's Soccer • Bioscript Infusion Services 	Renter-occupied	6

1 Undetermined were quantified as renter-occupied/ 2 Occupies two units/ 3 The relocation of 486 Wando Park Boulevard is considered one business relocation and one church relocation/4 Fieldwork indicated that the building appeared fully occupied between the two occupied tenants but the building could potentially house 5 units.

Additionally, the Selected Alternative would relocate two outbuildings. Therefore, a total of 54 relocations have been identified for the Selected Alternative. Five WWT port buildings would be impacted but are not presently considered relocations. Coordination is occurring with WWT to determine if these structures would be relocated, see the Relocation Impact Study (Appendix D) for additional details.

Replacement property is available in the Town of Mount Pleasant but is limited. Replacement property is more widely available within Charleston County, see Appendix D. The acquisition and relocation program will be conducted in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and all relocation resources will be made available to displacees without discrimination.

4.6 AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act (CAA) requires adoption of air quality standards, quality control regions, and state implementation plans. The federal government established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) to protect public health, safety, and welfare from known or anticipated effects of pollutants.¹¹ Roadway vehicles can contribute to four of six of the NAAQS pollutants: ozone, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and nitrogen dioxide. Transportation conformity with the NAAQS ensures federally funded or approved transportation plans, programs, and projects conform to air quality objectives established in State Implementation Plans (SIP). The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) Bureau of Air Quality is responsible for regulating and ensuring compliance with the CAA in South Carolina.

¹¹ The pollutants include sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and lead

Both Charleston and Berkeley County are considered in NAAQS attainment areas. Although Charleston County has no mandated requirements to develop air quality plans, the county has developed an early action plan in partnership with the SCDES Bureau of Air Quality to proactively ensure compliance with the ozone NAAQS.

Controlling air toxics emissions became a national priority with the passage of the CAA amendments in 1990, whereby Congress mandated the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate 188 air toxins, also known as hazardous air pollutants. EPA has assessed this list in its latest rule on the Control of Hazardous Air Pollutants from Mobile Sources and identified a group of 93 compounds emitted from mobile sources that are listed in the EPA Integrated Risk Information System. The EPA refers to these compounds as Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT). In addition, the EPA identified nine compounds with significant contributions from mobile sources that are among the national- and regional-scale cancer risk drivers from the EPA 2011 National Air Toxics Assessment.¹² While FHWA considers these the priority MSAT, the list is subject to change and may be adjusted to consider future EPA rules. These air pollutants are also emitted from roadway vehicles and are evaluated for potential effects during roadway projects.

The Selected Alternative is projected to have lower vehicle miles traveled (VMT) within the study area compared to the No-Build Alternative due to more direct routing of vehicles. VMT for the No-Build Alternative and the Selected Alternative are presented in **Table 4.2**. In addition, MSAT emissions would be expected to decrease as compared to the existing conditions because of improvements in engine efficiency and emission standards included in the EPA's national control programs.

Table 4.2: Change in Study Area VMT from the Selected Alternative (Alternative 2)

Study Area	No-Build	Selected Alternative
VMT	114,574,595	112,515,630
VMT Change vs No-Build	--	(1.8%)

While the Selected Alternative improves traffic operations on I-526 near the Long Point Road interchange, traffic may be in closer proximity to nearby homes, schools, and businesses. Due to this, ambient concentrations of MSAT could differ from the No-Build Alternative in localized areas. However, the projected difference in overall VMT and the correlated MSAT concentrations would be minimal between the Selected Alternative and the No-Build Alternative. For additional Air Quality details, see the Air Quality Analysis (Appendix T).

Air quality impacts under the Selected Alternative would be similar to those of the No-Build Alternative because no substantial shift to average vehicle speeds or total VMT in the study area would occur. Moreover, MSAT and criteria air pollutant levels, which are already in attainment of the NAAQS, would be expected to be substantially lower under the Selected Alternative. This is in part due to engine efficiency and in part due to improved traffic flow and LOS. The construction of the Selected Alternative would not be expected to result in adverse effects to air quality.

4.7 CLIMATE CHANGE

NEPA was established to ensure that federal actions use all practicable means to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony. The CEQ is assigned as the

¹² These compounds include acetaldehyde, acrolein, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, diesel particulate matter, ethylbenzene, formaldehyde, naphthalene, and polycyclic organic matter.

entity responsible for overseeing NEPA implementation. On January 9, 2023, CEQ issued NEPA Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change, establishing a common approach for Federal agencies for consideration of the effects of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate change relative to a proposed action.¹³ This interim GHG guidance builds upon and updates CEQ's 2016 Final Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on the Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Effects of Climate Change in National Environmental Policy Act Review, highlighting best practices for analysis grounded in science and agency experience. CEQ guidance calls for the quantification and disclosure of a proposed action's projected direct and indirect GHG emissions to a degree commensurate with the quantity of projected emissions attributable to the project, a comparison of those emissions to those of the No-Build Alternative, quantification of those emissions in the context of the best available applicable social cost of GHG (SC-GHG) estimates, consideration of environmental justice implications of climate change associated with the proposed action or its alternatives as applicable, and integration of relevant climate-related mitigation and resiliency measures.

FHWA guidelines require that GHG emission impacts of the project either be evaluated by means of reference to a program-level assessment, incorporating a statewide, metropolitan planning area, corridor, or sub-area projects improvements, or by means of a project-level assessment. This GHG assessment was completed at the project level.

The overall annual study area GHG emissions would be comparable between the No-Build Alternative and the Selected Alternative. Due to the relatively minor changes to VMT and average roadway speeds which would occur between the No-Build Alternative and the Selected Alternative, the difference in GHG emissions would be equivalently minor. For additional details, see the Greenhouse Gas Analysis (Appendix S).

4.8 NOISE

According to Title 23 CFR, Part 772 (23 CFR § 772), Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise, and the SCDOT Traffic Noise Abatement Policy, a noise analysis is required for proposed federal-aid highway projects on new location, that will physically alter an existing highway, or increase the number of through-travel lanes.¹⁴

A noise analysis was completed using FHWA's Traffic Noise Model Version 2.5 (TNM 2.5) to establish the base year 2022 noise levels, predicted No-Build Alternative (2050) noise levels, and the Selected Alternative (2050) noise levels.

Noise-sensitive sites (residences, churches, schools, recreational areas) within 500 feet of the Selected Alternative (Alternative 2) were analyzed for noise impacts. A total of 1,140 receptors were analyzed in the models. All sites along the proposed segments are categorized as either Activity Category B, C, D, or E, according to FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) and SCDOT policy. None of the sites along the

¹³ CEQ. *National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change*. January 2023. <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2023-00158>.

¹⁴ As stated by 23 CFR § 772, the physical alteration of an existing highway is where there is either: (i) Substantial Horizontal Alteration: a project that halves the distance between the traffic noise source and the closest receptor between the existing condition to the future build condition; or, (ii) Substantial Vertical Alteration: a project that removes shielding therefore exposing the line-of-sight between the receptor and the traffic noise source. This is done by either altering the vertical alignment of the highway or by altering the topography between the highway traffic noise source and the receptor.

proposed segments met the criteria for either Activity Category A, F, or G. FHWA NAC is shown in Chapter 4, Table 4.8 of the EA.

During the construction of the Selected Alternative there would be temporary and localized construction noise impacts. However, considering the relatively short-term nature of construction noise, these impacts are not expected to be substantial. Discrete construction noise abatement measures, including equipment-quieting devices, should be considered through all phases of construction. The contractor would be required to comply with applicable local noise ordinances and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations concerning noise attenuation devices on construction equipment.

The Selected Alternative would result in permanent noise impacts associated with the modification of an existing facility. Impacts would vary depending on the proximity to the project. For the future 2050 design year, noise levels approached or exceeded the FHWA NAC of 67 dB(A) for Category B and C at 456 receptors, with 446 representing NAC B and 10 representing NAC C. The results from TNM showed that noise levels for the 446 impacted receptors ranged from 66 dB(A) to 78 dB(A). **Table 4.3** is a summary of the noise impacts.

Table 4.3: Noise Impact Summary

Scenario	Approximate # of Impacted Receptors Approaching or Exceeding the NAC ^{1,2}					Substantial Noise Level Increase ³	Impacts Caused by Both Criteria ⁴	Total Impacts per 23 CFR 772 ⁵
	A	B	C	D	E			
Selected Alternative	--	446	10	--	--	--	--	456

1. This table represents the number of build-condition traffic noise impacts as predicted for the build-condition alternatives and no-build alternative presently under consideration. Refer to Appendix E for a detailed analysis of traffic noise impacts at each noise sensitive receptor location.
2. Predicted traffic noise level impact due to approaching or exceeding NAC.
3. Predicted "substantial increase" traffic noise level impact.
4. Predicted traffic noise level impact due to exceeding NAC and "substantial increase" in build-condition noise levels.
5. The total number of predicted impacts is not duplicated if receptors are predicted to be impacted by more than one criterion.

Per 23 CFR 772.13I and SCDOT's *Traffic Noise Abatement Policy*, noise abatement measures must be considered to reduce or eliminate noise levels to impacted receivers.¹⁵ The following abatement options were considered:

- Traffic management measures
- Alteration of horizontal and vertical alignments
- Acquisition of property rights for construction of noise barriers
- Acquisition of property rights to create a buffer zone
- Noise insulation of public use or nonprofit institutional structures
- Construction of noise barriers

Methods used to reduce noise levels must be cost-effective and practicable to build. Methods cannot be used if they are determined to be unsafe to construct or if the methods are too costly when compared to the benefits.

¹⁵ South Carolina Department of Transportation. 2023. SCDOT *Traffic Noise Abatement Policy*.
https://www.scdot.org/business/pdf/EnvToolShed/TrafficNoise/Approved%20Noise%20Policy_2_24_2023.pdf

Prior to the recommendation of noise abatement measures, the feasibility and reasonableness of the abatement measures must be determined per Section 6.1 and 6.2 of SCDOT's Traffic Noise Abatement Policy.

The project Environmental Assessment (accepted March 15, 2023) recommended four structural noise abatement measures (noise walls) for implementation. The recommended noise walls are described in **Table 4.4**. All four noise walls were determined to be feasible and reasonable for construction per SCDOT Policy criteria.

As part of the public involvement process, the viewpoints of benefited property owners and residents were solicited by mail. The balloting packet explained that the noise abatement measures would be constructed unless a majority (greater than 50% of the benefited receptors) of ballots received indicated a vote against the measure. One ballot was issued to owner-occupied benefited receptors, and two ballots were issued for leased properties (one ballot for the tenant and one ballot for the property owner). A total of 714 ballots were mailed on June 21, 2023. Appendix E documents the balloting results for the four proposed noise walls.

The ballots received by SCDOT indicated support for all four noise walls. However, the property owner of the Atria Senior Living facility (NSA-9) voted in opposition of NW 9, citing concerns that the wall would obstruct views of the Atria facility and its signage from I-526 and Long Point Road. SCDOT collaborated with the Atria owner and presented an option for a modified NW 9 design that would retain the benefits to the four single-family residences within NSA-9 as well as two cottages on the Atria property, while preserving visibility to the Atria facility signage from Long Point Road and provide partial-visibility to the Atria building from I-526. In January of 2024 all benefited receptors within NSA-9 were sent an updated graphic presenting the modified Noise Wall 9. Appendix E contains the letter and graphic sent to the benefited receptors in NSA-9 in June of 2023 and the updated letter and graphic sent in January of 2024. Appendix E also contains the technical details of the modified NW 9. **Table 4.4** shows the recommended noise walls as presented in the EA. **Table 4.5** shows the modified NW 9 designed in collaboration of SCDOT with the property owner of the Atria assisted living facility. Appendix E shows the balloting results, the original balloting package, the subsequent package sent after the modifications to NW 9 and the technical details of modified NW 9.

Table 4.4: Recommended Noise Walls

Noise Barrier Name (NSA)	Length ¹ (ft)	Area ¹ (ft ²)	Number of Benefited Receptors	Area per Benefited Receptor/Allowable Area per Benefited Receptor (ft ²)
NW 1a/3/6/8 (NSAs 1a, 3, 6, and 8)	9,094	221,769	278	798/1,500
NW 2a/4 (NSAs 2a and 4)	2,820	67,146	198	339/1,500
NW 9 (NSA-9)	3,620	87,461	81	1080/1,500
NW 12 (NSA-12)	2,040	48,481	155	313/1,500

1. Length and area shown are for ground mounted barriers only. I-526 will be widened in the future and placing noise barriers on structures will be evaluated at that time.

Table 4.5: Modified Noise Wall 9

Noise Barrier Name (NSA)	Length ¹ (ft)	Area ¹ (ft ²)	Number of Benefited Receptors	Area per Benefited Receptor/Allowable Area per Benefited Receptor (ft ²)
Modified NW 9 (NSA-9)	2,720	64,198	45	1,427/1,500

1. Length and area shown are for ground mounted barriers only. I-526 will be widened in the future and placing noise barriers on structures will be evaluated at that time.

Based on the studies thus far accomplished, SCDOT intends to install highway traffic noise abatement measures in the form of four noise barriers. These preliminary indications of likely abatement measures are based upon the current preliminary design.

- Noise Wall 1a/3/6/8 is located north of I-526 and west of Long Point Road between the Wando River bridge and Belle Hall Parkway. The barrier has an area of 798 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 8 dB(A) for 277 residences and 1 pool.
- Noise Wall NW 2a/4 is located south of I-526 between the Wando River bridge and Ridge Road. The barrier has an area of 339 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 8 dB(A) for 197 residences and 1 pool.
- Noise Wall 9 is located south of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Lone Tree Drive and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek. The barrier has an area of 1,427 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 7 dB(A) for 45 residences.
- Noise Wall 12 is located north of I-526 and east of Long Point Road between Long Point Road and the bridge at Hobcaw Creek. The barrier has an area of 313 square feet per benefitted receptor that reduces the noise level by an average of 10 dB(A) for 153 residences, 1 pool, and 1 picnic area.

If these conditions change substantially during final design, the currently proposed abatement measures might not be provided. A final decision of the installation of the abatement measure(s) will be made upon completion of the project's design and the public involvement processes. The location of the four noise barriers can be found in Figures 1 through 6 of the Noise Analysis Report (Appendix E).

4.9 WATER QUALITY

SCDES develops a priority list of waterbodies that do not currently meet state water quality standards pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and 40 CFR § 130.7. It is commonly referred to as the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters. According to SCDES's Watershed Atlas, there are no 303(d) listed waters found within the study area.

According to SCDES's Watershed Atlas, one permanent water quality monitoring station (MD-264) is in the Wando River near the northern terminus, but outside of, the study area and five random sampling stations are located west of the study area in Hobcaw Creek and the Wando River. The entire study area is designated for municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) watersheds.

SCDES also designates suitable shellfish harvesting waters (SFH) and determines water quality classifications and standards for the state. Hobcaw Creek, the unnamed tributary (UT) to Hobcaw Creek, and the UT to Rathall Creek are classified by SCDES as SFH. The impoundment adjacent to the UT to Hobcaw Creek located under I-526 is designated as freshwater.

The Selected Alternative is not expected to adversely affect surface waters or water quality. No bridges over SCDES-listed surface waters will be replaced but there would be minor work at the ends of the bridge structures over the UT to Rathall Creek, the UT to Hobcaw Creek, and Hobcaw Creek. The westbound ramp bridge over freshwater wetlands in the southeast quadrant of the interchange would be replaced. Impacts associated with construction site preparation would be temporary in nature. The contractor will be required to use approved best management practices (BMPs) for erosion prevention and sediment control during construction to minimize potential impacts to water quality.

The contractor will develop a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from SCDES and SCDES Bureau of Coastal Management (BCM) before construction can commence. The contractor will be required to properly install the required erosion, turbidity, and sediment control devices around the perimeter of the construction site and staging areas prior to all other construction activities.

4.10 WETLANDS AND WATERS OF THE U.S.

Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) are subject to federal jurisdiction and protected by Section 404 of the CWA (33 United States Code ([USC] 1344)).¹⁶ Wetland habitats are defined as areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.¹⁷ Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the agency responsible for protecting WOTUS, utilizes specific hydraulic, soil, and vegetation criteria in defining the boundary of wetlands within their jurisdiction.

Tidal wetlands and waters are also considered WOTUS and are regulated by USACE under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, which permits certain activities within navigable waters, including those subject to the ebb and flow of the tide. Tidal wetlands and waters are regulated as “Critical Area” by SCDES-BCM.

The project team performed wetland and stream delineations in July 2022 using the methods outlined by USACE’s Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain Regional Supplement to determine jurisdictional boundaries. A Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination request (SAC-2022-01082) was approved by USACE Charleston District on October 12, 2022, see Appendix G. A Critical Area plat was submitted to SCDES-BCM on December 14, 2022, and approved on January 30, 2023.

Freshwater and tidally influenced wetlands are present in the study area, see **Table 4.6**. Freshwater wetlands include forested and emergent wetlands. Freshwater ponds that serve as stormwater

¹⁶ On December 30, 2022, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) announced the final “Revised Definition of ‘Waters of the United States’” rule, which was subsequently published in the Federal Register on January 18, 2023 (88 FR 3004). The rule revises the definition WOTUS in 33 CFR 328.2 and 40 CFR 120.2 and was proposed to become effective on March 20, 2023. This revision was not expected to change the delineated boundaries of WOTUS identified in the Preliminary Jurisdictional Determination obtained for the project (see Appendix G).

¹⁷ <https://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/Portals/38/docs/USACE%2087%20Wetland%20Delineation%20Manual.pdf>

retention basins are also present throughout the study area. Tidally influenced wetlands and waters (Critical Areas) include saltmarshes, tidal creeks, and the Wando River.

A parcel owned by the SCPA contains approximately 9.87 acres of freshwater wetlands protected by a restrictive covenant. These wetlands are protected as compensatory mitigation.

Table 4.6: Jurisdictional Wetlands in the Study Area

Habitat Type	Area (acres)	Length (Linear Feet)
Tidal Wetlands/Critical Area	19.7	N/A
Non-Tidal Wetlands (Freshwater)	15.3	N/A
Non-Wetland Water (Ponds)	10.7	N/A

The Selected Alternative construction footprint, considering a 50-foot buffer near water resources, would result in unavoidable impacts to approximately 9.4 acres of freshwater wetlands, 1.6 acres of freshwater ponds, and 3.1 acres of Critical Areas. Impacts would result from the placement of fill material, clearing, construction access, and the staging of materials and equipment.

The grading or placement of fill in wetlands will require authorization from USACE and SCDES. The limits of any clearing, grading, or fill in wetlands will be delineated and shown on approved permitted plans by USACE and SCDES. SCDOT and the contractor will comply with all applicable permits and permit conditions for the placement of fill in wetlands.

Avoidance

There are no practicable alternatives to avoid impacts to wetlands. Therefore, the project would include all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from construction.

Minimization

The project would be constructed through design-build procurement, which inherently encourages the contractors to avoid and minimize wetlands impacts to reduce project costs. The project would utilize, to the extent practicable, uplands and existing fill materials to minimize the discharge of fill in wetlands throughout the project. Implementing erosion control measures (i.e., seeding of slopes, silt fences, sediment basins as appropriate) would also minimize impacts to adjacent wetlands. BMPs will be required to avoid or minimize the migration of sediment or hazardous materials from the construction site into adjacent wetlands for the duration of the project.

Mitigation

Compensatory mitigation would be required to offset unavoidable impacts to wetlands per USACE and SCDES requirements. Mitigation for impacts to wetlands would be finalized during the permitting process. Coordination with the appropriate federal and state agencies would be completed to identify and provide appropriate mitigation for anticipated impacts. It is anticipated that mitigation would be provided through the purchase of mitigation bank credits from an approved mitigation bank(s).

4.11 ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS

Section 404 Permit - Section 404 of the CWA regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into WOTUS (33 USC 1344) and authorizes USACE to issue permits for projects with impacts to WOTUS.¹⁸ It is anticipated the project would require an Individual Section 404 permit authorization from USACE. The Section 404 permit application package will be completed and submitted to the Regulatory Division of the USACE Charleston District concurrent with the Section 401 Water Quality Certification, issued by SCDES Bureau of Water, and the Coastal Zone Consistency (CZC) Determination, issued by SCDES BCM.

Section 10 Permit - Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 CFR Part 322) requires authorization from USACE for the construction of any structure in or over any navigable water of the U.S. The tidally influenced wetlands and tidal creeks within the study area are considered navigable waters and will therefore require authorization under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. The Section 10 permit will be authorized by USACE as a joint permitting decision along with the Section 404 permit.

Section 401 Water Quality Certification - Section 401 of the CWA requires any request for a federal permit involving activities which impact WOTUS (Section 404 permit) to also acquire a Water Quality Certification. This certification involves a review of the project and analysis of its potential effects on water quality. In South Carolina, SCDES is responsible for granting, denying, or waiving Section 401 Water Quality Certifications. The project requires a Section 404 Individual permit; therefore, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification is required before USACE will act on the Section 404 Permit.

Critical Area Permit – The project is in a coastal county and is expected to involve impacts to Critical Areas. SCDES BCM has permitting authority over Critical Areas and a permit must be received before any alterations occur.

Coastal Zone Consistency (CZC) Determination – SCDES BCM is required to review all state and federal permit applications for activities within the eight-county coastal zone for consistency with the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Plan and grant a CZC. A CZC ensures the activity protects the quality of the coastal environment and promotes the economic and social improvement of the coastal zone.

NPDES Construction General Permit - Section 402 of the CWA formed the NPDES, which regulates pollutant discharges, including stormwater, into WOTUS. SCDES is responsible for managing the NPDES program to ensure stormwater runoff during construction would not have an adverse effect on water quality. NPDES permits require the project be designed to protect WOTUS, that erosion control BMPs be implemented, and that a SWPPP be prepared for construction activities exceeding one acre of ground disturbance.

¹⁸ USACE may only issue a permit for the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative. The Section 404(b)1 guidelines, which give criteria used to evaluate activities regulated under Section 404 of the CWA, dictates fill material cannot be permitted in wetlands or WOTUS if a practicable alternative (considering cost, existing technology, and logistics of an alternative) would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, as long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences. USACE considers many factors when evaluating environmental consequences, including an evaluation of the probable impacts on the 20 public interest factors listed in 33 CFR 320.4.

4.12 FLOODPLAINS

EO 11988, Floodplain Management, requires that efforts be made by federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. Floodplains are also regulated by state and local authorities. Encroachments into the floodplain are discouraged since this removes floodwater storage capacity. If impacts cannot be avoided, measures must be implemented to minimize impacts and restore the floodplain to the extent possible. Federal regulations allow development in the 100-year floodplain or the floodway if hydrologic and hydraulic analysis demonstrate that the development would meet the requirements set forth by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The study area encompasses 27.85 acres of floodplains. Floodplains within the study area are within FEMA flood zone AE, a high-risk 100-year floodplain (one percent chance of flood during any given year).

The Selected Alternative would involve construction within the 100-year floodplain. The existing alignment of I-526 and Long Point Road would be used to the greatest extent practicable to avoid and minimize fill placement within the floodplain. Any modifications to floodplains would require detailed hydraulic analyses, coordination with Charleston County Floodplain Administrator, and a FEMA No-Rise Certification to be obtained. No changes to flood elevations are anticipated based on the current level of design.

4.13 NATURAL HABITAT & WILDLIFE

Fragmentation and loss of wildlife habitat is an unavoidable consequence of roadway construction and urban development. The Selected Alternative would result in some additional habitat fragmentation; however, natural habitats in the study area have already been fragmented by urban development. The Selected Alternative is not expected to result in adverse impacts to terrestrial or aquatic wildlife. Most wildlife species present in the study area are highly mobile and would likely move out of the construction area to avoid direct impacts. Additionally, local species are accustomed to human disturbances from the existing roadway and are expected to move back into the study area upon project completion. Therefore, impacts to habitats would be localized and impacts to wildlife species are anticipated to be temporary.

4.14 THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association - National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) are responsible for the enforcement of federal wildlife laws, the protection of threatened and endangered species, and should be consulted in accordance with the Threatened and Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.

The Charleston County list of federally protected species, updated March 29, 2022, was obtained from USFWS's Charleston Field Office website¹⁹ and a South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Natural Heritage Viewer report was used to evaluate potential project effects on listed species.

¹⁹USFWS. 2022. South Carolina List of At-Risk, Candidate, Endangered, and Threatened Species by County. Charleston, SC. https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/SouthCarolina_County_by_County_List.pdf. Accessed: March 16, 2022.

Threatened and endangered species that are known to occur in Charleston County are presented in **Table 4.7**. For descriptions of protected species, please refer to the Biological Evaluation (Appendix J).

Table 4.7: Charleston County Federally Listed Species

Common Name	Federal Protection Status	Scientific Name	Effect Determination
Amphibian Species			
Frosted flatwoods salamander	Threatened: Critical Habitat	<i>Ambystoma cingulatum</i>	No effect
Bird Species			
American wood stork	Threatened	<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Not Likely to Adversely Affect
Eastern black rail	Threatened	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis jamaicensis</i>	Not Likely to Adversely Affect
Piping plover	Threatened	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Not Likely to Adversely Affect
Red-cockaded woodpecker	Threatened	<i>Picoides borealis</i>	No effect
Red knot	Threatened	<i>Calidris canutus rufa</i>	Not Likely to Adversely Affect
Insect Species			
Monarch butterfly	Candidate	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	
Mammal Species			
Northern long-eared bat*	Endangered	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Not Likely to Adversely Affect
Tri-colored bat**	Proposed Endangered	<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>	
West Indian manatee***	Threatened	<i>Trichechus manatus</i>	No effect
Plant Species			
American chaffseed	Endangered	<i>Schwalbea americana</i>	No effect
Canby's dropwort	Endangered	<i>Oxypolis canbyi</i>	No effect
Pondberry	Endangered	<i>Lindera melissifolia</i>	No effect
Seabeach amaranth	Threatened	<i>Amaranthus pumilus</i>	No effect
Reptile Species			
Green sea turtle****	Threatened: Critical Habitat	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	No effect

* At the time of the development of the EA, the NLEB was listed as threatened. The NLEB was uplisted to endangered on March 31, 2023. Consultation was reinitiated and concurrence from USFWS received on Aug 10, 2023

** Proposed for listing as endangered by USFWS on September 14, 2022; effective date to be determined

*** Also regulated under the Marine Mammal Protection Act

**** Species under the joint jurisdiction of USFWS and NOAA Fisheries

The Selected Alternative was determined not likely to adversely affect the American wood stork, eastern black rail, piping plover, red knot, and northern long-eared bat. The Selected Alternative would have no effect on the frosted flatwoods salamander, red-cockaded woodpecker, West Indian manatee, American chaffseed, Canby's dropwort, pondberry, seabeach amaranth, or green sea turtles. Concurrence from USFWS on this determination was received on September 21, 2022 (see Appendix J and/or Appendix O [Agency Coordination]).

On November 30, 2022, USFWS published a final rule in the Federal Register (87 FR 73488) to uplist the northern long-eared bat from threatened to endangered. USFWS's change to the rule became effective on March 31, 2023.²⁰ Consultation with USFWS was reinitiated on August 9, 2023, for the northern long-

²⁰ <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2023-01/effective-date-reclassify-northern-long-eared-bat-endangered-extended#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20Fish%20and%20Wildlife,%2C%20to%20March%2031%2C%202023.> Accessed January 31, 2023.

eared bat. The not likely to adversely affect determination in the EA did not change considering the listing change. Concurrence from USFWS was received on August 10, 2023.

On September 13, 2022, USFWS proposed to list the tri-colored bat as endangered.²¹ A determination of effects is not required for tri-colored bat until the listing designation goes into effect. SCDOT will reinitiate consultation with USFWS if the listing designation goes into effect.

On July 24, 2024, an addendum to the Biological Evaluation provided an updated northern long-eared bat evaluation. The addendum stated that the project is not likely to result in unauthorized takes of northern long-eared bats.

Through coordination with USFWS and SCDNR, it has been determined that potential impacts to bat species can be minimized if tree-clearing restrictions are adhered to. Tree-clearing restrictions would take place between April 1 through July 31 and December 15 through February 15.

4.15 MIGRATORY BIRDS

Migratory birds listed in 50 CFR 10.13 of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 makes it illegal to “take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird except under the terms of a valid permit issued pursuant to Federal regulations”.

The Selected Alternative is not expected to impact migratory birds. SCDOT will comply with the MBTA regarding the avoidance of taking of individual migratory birds and the destruction of their active nests. The contractor shall notify the Resident Construction Engineer (RCE) at least four weeks prior to construction/demolition/maintenance of bridges and box culverts. If a nest is observed after construction/demolition/maintenance has begun, the contractor will cease work and immediately notify the RCE, who will notify the Environmental Services Officer Compliance Division.

4.16 BALD EAGLE

The bald eagle is no longer protected under the ESA, but the species is afforded federal protection through the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) of 1940, as well as the MBTA. The BGEPA, 16 USC 668-668c, prohibits the “take” of bald eagles including their parts, nests, or eggs by anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior. For a description of bald eagle please refer to Appendix J.

Suitable bald eagle foraging habitat was not observed in the study area. Suitable nest trees are present, but no nests were observed during field visits conducted from August 2018 through September 2019, and the summer of 2022. According to SCDNR’s Natural Heritage Trust database, the closest eagle nest is approximately 1.5 miles north of the study area, along the Wando River. The Selected Alternative is not expected to impact bald eagles because no foraging habitat is present in the study area and no nests were observed during field visits.

²¹ <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2022-09/proposal-list-tricolored-bat-endangered>. Accessed January 31, 2023.

4.17 MARINE MAMMALS

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) of 1972 prohibits, the “take” of marine mammals in U.S. waters and by U.S. citizens on the high seas, and the importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products into the U.S. Jurisdiction for MMPA is shared by USFWS and NOAA Fisheries. Marine mammals are mammals that rely on the ocean to survive. They include, but are not limited to, whales, dolphins, porpoises, manatees, and dugongs.

Two marine mammals, the common bottlenose dolphin and West Indian manatee may occur within the Wando River located adjacent to the study area. The Wando River is suitable habitat year-round for bottlenose dolphin and is also summer habitat for the West Indian manatee. According to SCDNR’s Natural Heritage Species Reviewer, the closest known occurrence of West Indian manatee in the Wando River is approximately one mile southwest of the study area. The Selected Alternative would not impact marine mammals because no work is being proposed in the Wando River. The shallow tidal creeks in the study area where work may occur are not suitable habitat for the dolphin or manatee.

4.18 ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) of 1976, as amended in 1996, requires that NOAA Fisheries work with federal and state agencies, regional fishery management councils, and the fishing community to protect, conserve, and enhance essential fish habitat (EFH). As defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, EFH is waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity (16 USC 1802, 50 CFR § 600.10). Locations and types of EFH that have a greater need for conservation and management are referred to as Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC). HAPC are considered high priority areas for conservation, management, or research because they are rare, sensitive, stressed by development, or important to overall ecosystem function.

EFH was approximated using wetland delineations to determine the estuarine boundary and the most recent publicly available aerial imagery to determine habitat types. EFH in the study area include estuarine emergent wetland, estuarine tidal creek, intertidal non-vegetated flat, palustrine emergent wetland, unconsolidated bottom, and oysters. Oyster reef is the only EFH HAPC in the study area. One oyster reef is located along Hobcaw Creek, approximately 90 feet west of the I-526 bridge over Hobcaw Creek. Additional information is provided in Appendix K. The Selected Alternative may impact approximately 2.79 acres of EFH. An EFH Assessment (Appendix K) was submitted to NOAA Fisheries for review and comment on October 21, 2022. Concurrence with the findings of the initial EFH Assessment was received from NOAA Fisheries on February 2, 2023.

The contractor will be required to honor/implement SCDOT standard environmental commitments and BMPs, in addition to those project-specific commitments developed through agency coordination and the permitting process. The final project design will incorporate the conditions of SCDOT’s General MS4 permit and TMDL watershed guidance contained in the Stormwater Quality Design Manual (see Chapter 4.10 of the EA). The contractor will develop an SWPPP and obtain an NPDES permit from SCDES before construction can begin. Temporary silt/turbidity curtains will be installed prior to the commencement of in-water work, where practicable. The contractor will be required to use SCDOT BMPs for soil and erosion control during construction.

4.19 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL SITES

Hazardous waste sites contain waste with properties that make it dangerous or capable of having a harmful effect on human health or the environment. Hazardous waste is generated from many sources, ranging from industrial manufacturing process wastes to batteries and may come in many forms, including liquids, solids gases, and sludges.²² EPA, states, territories, and tribes work in partnership with industry to protect the environment and human health from potential releases.²³

Hazardous materials were inventoried and analyzed for the study area. Thirteen listings were identified within or adjacent to the study area that have the potential to contain hazardous waste. Based on site reconnaissance and database review, no sites of high concern were identified, seven sites were determined to be sites of moderate concern, and six sites were determined to be sites of low concern.

During historical aerial review of the Selected Alternative, three additional parcels were identified as having the potential to contain hazardous materials. For additional information, refer to the Hazardous Materials Technical Memorandum (Appendix L).

The Selected Alternative is located adjacent to, or partially on, seven sites of concern identified during evaluation of hazardous material sites:

- Wando Trucking (510 Wando Lane)
- Bridge Terminal Transport (472 Long Point Road)
- Wando Fuel and Truck Service (454 Shipping Lane)
- Lyerly's Cleaners (620 Long Point Road)
- Wando Properties LLC (Parcel ID 5560000294)
- Long Point Holdings (Parcel ID 5370000010)
- South Carolina State Ports Authority (Parcel ID 5370000041)

The presence or extent of hazardous contamination in soil or groundwater has not been determined by regulatory agencies or private entities at this time. Any properties partially or wholly acquired for this project where ground disturbance would occur may require further inspection and assessment or be further evaluated through a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment.

4.20 CULTURAL RESOURCES

This project has been conducted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended (54 USC § 300101 et seq.), and NEPA, as amended, to consider the effects of the Selected Alternative on historic properties. As part of this process, SCDOT consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), federally recognized American Indian tribes, and other parties with an interest in the undertaking.

A cultural resources assessment was conducted in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR § 800) in May 2022 and included conducting background research, performing an archaeological survey, architectural survey, laboratory analyses, and a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) assessment.

²² <https://www.epa.gov/hw/learn-basics-hazardous-waste>

²³ <https://www.epa.gov/ust#:~:text=Approximately%20542%2C000%20underground%20storage%20tanks,nearly%20half%20of%20all%20Americans.>

The archaeological survey identified two newly identified archaeological sites as well as 15 previously recorded archaeological sites within the area of potential effect. Additional information is available in the Cultural Resources Survey (Appendix M).

One site (38CH2683) is recommended eligible for the NRHP. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) was developed for 38CH2683 in coordination with FHWA, SCDOT, and SHPO. The MOA was developed in 2022 to address adverse impacts for 38CH2683 and is available in Appendix N.

The architectural survey conducted in May 2022, following South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) (2018) standards identified four new aboveground resources in the architectural area of potential effect, including three buildings and one road. Previous investigations identified one historic district and two individual resources. Two sites (7802 and 8553.01) were recommended as National Register eligible contributing resources, and one site (Snowden Historic District) is NHRP-eligible.

SHPO Site No.7802 has been moved to the Snowden Community Center outside the architectural area of potential effect and the study area; therefore, the site would not be impacted by the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative would not include design changes to the Egypt Road (site 8553.01) intersection with Long Point Road. The Snowden Historic District boundary lies outside the current project footprint, north and east of the Egypt Road and Long Point Road intersection. Therefore, the project would have no direct effect on the Snowden Historic District. The Selected Alternative would not alter any of the characteristics that qualify the resource for inclusion in the NRHP, nor would it compromise the integrity of the property or diminish its architectural or historic significance. Therefore, the Selected Alternative would have no adverse effect on architectural resources.

5.0 PROJECT COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 LETTER OF INTENT

The Letter of Intent (LOI) was distributed to notify resource and regulatory agencies (as well as local businesses and groups) of the initiation of the project. The LOI was distributed on July 26, 2022, by mail. The recipients of the LOI may all be seen within Chapter 4 and Appendix O. The LOI provided general project information and requested comments on potential environmental issues and concerns within the study area and was done in conjunction with four agency meetings, which were used to provide background information on the project, review the project schedule, and discuss the alternatives considered.

5.2 AGENCY COORDINATION MEETINGS

Agency meetings have taken place throughout the project. Agency Coordination Effort (ACE) meetings have been used to provide background information, review the project schedule, and discuss alternatives being considered. ACE meeting attendees included representatives from SCDOT, the project team, EPA, FHWA, NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, USACE, SCDES-BCM, and SCDNR. ACE meeting summaries, materials and detailed correspondence with agencies can be found in Appendix O.

- **ACE Meeting 1** was held on May 12, 2022, and included a review of the PEL Study and its connection to this project. Attendees were provided an overview of the study area, public comment summary from the PEL Study outreach efforts, conceptual build alternative designs, project purpose, and the project schedule.
- **ACE Meeting 2** was held on August 11, 2022, to discuss the status of the project, identify public concerns, and review conceptual build alternatives (see Chapter 3 of the EA).

5.3 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

*Figure 5.1: Public Information Meeting
Comments and Concerns*



A PIM was held on August 2, 2022, at the R.L. Jones Center in the Town of Mount Pleasant, with a corresponding comment period from July 26 through September 2, 2022. During this same time period, the PIM materials were made available through a variety of methods, including on the project website, in-person at the PIM, at the I-526 LCC Community Office, and by mail upon request. All materials were available in English and Spanish, and a translator was available at the in-person PIM. The public could provide input by attending the in-person meeting, completing a comment form or the survey on the project website, or through email. Additionally, the public could engage and ask questions of the project team by calling or texting the project hotline. At the meeting however, specific topics pertaining to the EA were addressed such as moving from the PEL Study to the NEPA process, the purpose and need statements for the project, anticipated traffic growth, alternatives screening process, noise

evaluation processes, maintenance, and the right-of-way acquisition process.

A total of 301 people attended in person, and the project website had 5,285 visitors. A total of 538 comments were received through the project website, email, letters, or written comments made during the meeting, and SCDOT provided a response for all comments received in the form of a letter and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document. Based on the meeting, the most common concerns were related to traffic, safety, noise impacts, truck traffic, removal of the left turn onto Belle Hall Parkway, and the impact the project may have on the neighborhood, a breakdown can be seen within **Figure 5.1**.

5.4 PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing was held for the project at Mount Pleasant Town Hall (100 Ann Edwards Lane) on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. At 6:00 p.m. a formal presentation and verbal comment session was provided where participants were given the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding the project both in-person or virtually via Zoom. The entirety of the formal presentation and verbal comment session was also available via video livestream on the project website (www.526LCCLongPoint.com) and remains available for viewing. Additionally, all materials that were available at the in-person public hearing were available throughout the official comment period held from April 17 through May 17, 2023.

Approximately 120 people attended the public hearing. Five display boards were exhibited throughout the main lobby and inside a large meeting room directly off the lobby. Participants were also able to view renderings of the Selected Alternative and recommended noise walls on smartboards which were placed throughout the lobby. Representatives from SCDOT and the project team were located at each display and smartboard to assist the public and answer any questions. Copies of the EA and a right-of-way lookup station were available as well.

5.5 PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

From April 17 through May 17, 2023, 211 comments were received during the public hearing. Nine comments were handwritten and submitted at the meeting, 73 comments were emailed, 2 comments were mailed in, and 124 were submitted via the project website. Approximately 57 percent of comments were in support of the project, while approximately 3 percent expressed opposition. Top comment themes included noise concerns or need for noise abatement, support of the Selected Alternative and new interchange ramps, traffic and truck traffic concerns, and right-of-way and neighborhood impacts. The comments, SCDOT's responses, and the public hearing transcript have been included in the project's Public Hearing Certification Package submitted with the SCDOT's request for approval of a FONSI for the project (Appendix Q).

6.0 BASIS FOR FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The SCDOT has determined that this project will have no significant impact on the human environment. This FONSI is based on the EA and other supporting information, which has been independently evaluated by the SCDOT and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the project and appropriate mitigation measures. The EA provided sufficient evidence and analysis that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The SCDOT takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope and content of the EA and other environmental documentation for this project.

Date: 8/22/2024 FHWA: *Emily O Lawton* Emily O. Lawton,
Division Administrator