

# Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting Comments

## Proposed Bishopville Truck Route Project (S-69-08)

### Bishopville, Lee County, South Carolina



Date Prepared:	October 14, 2019
Meeting Date/Time/Place:	August 22, 2019, 1:00 - 3:00 pm, Colclough Memorial Building
Meeting Purpose:	To provide stakeholders the opportunity to review the proposed build alternatives and present questions and concerns to SCDOT staff and the project team.
Prepared By:	DRMP, Inc.

A Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting was held prior to the Public Information Meeting for the Proposed Bishopville Truck Route Project on August 22, 2019 at the Colclough Memorial Building. The purpose of the meeting was to provide stakeholders the opportunity to review the three build alternatives identified through a comprehensive alternative-screening process to be evaluated further in a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). SCDOT and the project team were present to provide additional information and answers questions/concerns of the stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting was opened by Jacob Meetze of SCDOT, followed by introductions of the project team and individual stakeholders. The project team provided a project update and discussed how the three build alternatives were selected through a comprehensive alternative-screening process. The project team presented the next steps and project schedule prior to opening the floor to the group to propose questions and comments to the team. The following questions/comments were presented by the stakeholders during the meeting to the project team and their corresponding responses are provided below:

**QUESTION: Why is the project team asking for comments when comments were submitted at previous meetings?**

**RESPONSE:** In the next stage of the project, a detailed draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) will be prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The purpose of this meeting is to get feedback on the three proposed build alternatives identified to move forward with the project. Previous comments from past meetings are still being considered and will be included in the project record. This is an opportunity for stakeholders to give additional feedback or to restate previous comments.

**QUESTION: Are stakeholders allowed to still share approval/disapproval regarding the project?**

**RESPONSE:** The project team welcomes and encourages all comments and concerns by individuals to be shared during the planning process. Information provided by stakeholders and the public is critical during every stage of the planning process.

**COMMENT: Please consider how the change in the interchange impact safety, school, cemetery, churches, etc. Family and gathering places will be affected as well. There are a lot of families that have lived in their homes for a long time. Also concerned that the schools are not on the map (Lee Central High and Lee Middle School). Students and school busses will be affected. Project has fallen to the East side and not West side. Not comfortable with affecting neighbors.**

**RESPONSE:** The project team is aware of the resources located within the study area. The community impact assessment area has been expanded to include Lee Middle and Central High Schools, and a detailed analysis of potential impacts will be included in the DEIS. SCDOT will work with residents, local government, planners, etc. on how to address impacts to community resources, including cemeteries, churches, gathering places, residents, and schools.

**QUESTION: Why are we being asked to resubmit comments already resubmitted?**

**RESPONSE:** You do not have to resubmit previously submitted comments. All previous comments are part of the project record. If you want to restate your comments however, please feel free to.

**QUESTION: Have not heard anything regarding the project in some time. Who is pushing this project forward?**

**RESPONSE:** The Santee Lynches Regional Council of Governments (SLRCOG) identified the need for this project. Previous studies identified truck traffic as a problem on Main Street. SLRCOG presented a comprehensive study to SCDOT and asked for assistance addressing truck traffic. SLRCOG is not advocating where the road should be built; SCDOT is evaluating project alternatives.

**QUESTION: How is the project to be funded and what is to happen if funds run out as prices increase in the years to come? Are there any additional options for funding?**

**RESPONSE:** A true understanding of funding cannot be reached until the project is further along in to the design. The first step is to identify how much funding is needed and then assess the magnitude, necessary funds, and other possible funding opportunities.

**QUESTION: Considering that all of the proposed build alternatives are located on the east side, what are the anticipated impacts to the schools and residents on the east side? How will the project impact the I-20 interchange with SC 341 (Wisacky Highway) as trucks are directed to use this route?**

**RESPONSE:** The project team is aware of the schools, neighborhoods, and other resources within the study area. The team will work with local governments, planners, etc. on how to address and mitigate impacts to resources, including residents and schools. In addition, SCDOT is currently studying the crash history at the I-20 interchange with SC 341.

**QUESTION: Why are trucks not following signs posted regarding truck travel, and why are they not taking different routes?**

**RESPONSE:** Depending on the route or needs of the truck, truck traffic will typically follow the most optimal route. This could be the fastest route, shortest distance, limited turns, etc. SCDOT cannot forecast if trucks will adhere to posted signs.

**QUESTION: Why not institute signs rerouting trucks instead of spending a lot of money on a truck route? An example given is the “No Trucks Route” sign down Chandler Street. The money from tickets can be spent on fixing up the town.**

**RESPONSE:** Removing truck traffic from downtown is unfortunately more complicated than installing “No Trucks” signs. SCDOT is not involved in issuing citations to trucks operating against an ordinance; the ordinance is enforced by the local authorities.

**QUESTION: Why spend \$25 million on a truck route when trucks will still come through downtown?**

**RESPONSE:** The purpose of the project is to reduce truck traffic from downtown, not to eliminate it entirely. The project team is aware that trucks can/will still opt to travel downtown even if a truck route is constructed.

**QUESTION: Why has Interstate 20 not been looked at as a possible truck route? It has been paved five or six times in the past four years.**

**RESPONSE:** Based on the initial traffic forecasts, a west side option would not reduce the number of trucks downtown. Without a connection on the east side, Interstate 20 would not serve as a viable option for trucks that travel to SC 341 (Bethune Highway) or US 15 (N. Main Street) as trucks will typically follow the most optimal route.

**QUESTION: A viable option to the build alternatives would be to use Lee State Park Road (Exit 123). This is a two-lane road that provides access to SC 341 (Bethune Highway). Instead of money to construct the build alternative, why not use the funds to widen Lee State Park Road?**

**RESPONSE:** Widening Lee State Park Road would be an expensive project due to having to purchase right-of-way from a significant number of residential tracts, significant drainage improvements, and existing utility impacts. The road would also have to be realigned in several locations to bring the existing horizontal and vertical curves up to new design standards.

**QUESTION: Can SCDOT require trucks to take a longer route to avoid downtown? This was brought up a few years ago.**

**RESPONSE:** Implementing restricted routes would require that signs and ordinances to be put in to place. SCDOT does not enforce ordinances; those would be left up to the local authorities to enforce.

**QUESTION: How do you know if you build the truck route, that trucks will use the road? Why only have alternatives on the east side of Bishopville?**

**RESPONSE:** Using previously developed segments, field studies, and comments received, SCDOT created 24 complete alternatives. An initial “high-level” traffic study was then conducted, which studied a “no-build” alternative and the 24 complete alternatives, which were located on both the east and west sides of town. The modeling results indicated that 1,500 trucks would travel through downtown in 2045 if the project was not built. The initial traffic modeling results indicated truck traffic downtown would decrease with some of the possible alternatives. The results were then used to screen the alternatives, and the alternatives that were not anticipated to meet the project purpose and need of reducing truck traffic in 2045 were eliminated from further consideration. Alternatives which had the potential for greater environmental impacts were also eliminated, as were alternatives with similar alignments.

**QUESTION: Why doesn't SCDOT try a trial run and look into using a “temporary” truck route? This can use signage to direct trucks off of Main Street and be implemented at both the east and west ends.**

**RESPONSE:** The primary purpose of the project is to address future truck traffic traveling through downtown Bishopville. The study shows that not many independent truck drivers are traveling through downtown. Most are part of something bigger, more complex network system.

**QUESTION: Has SCDOT looked in to how the build alternatives will affect farmland and irrigation? A road constructed through farmland will cause remapping of the property and insurance rates to increase.**

**RESPONSE:** In the next stage of the project, a detailed DEIS will be prepared in compliance with NEPA, which requires the project team to identify the presence of resources, potential project impacts, and opportunities to mitigate impacts, including those related to farmland and irrigation systems. In the event that property must be acquired or property/irrigation would be affected, the SCDOT encourages landowners to discuss any impacts or losses, both current and potential, with SCDOT and the project team.

**QUESTION: Traffic counts were taken (uncertain as to the time) coming off of I-20. What came from those traffic counts?**

**RESPONSE:** SCDOT is not familiar with counts taken in the area during this time. That may have been a district study. More detailed traffic counts and traffic analyses will be conducted as part of the DEIS process.

**QUESTION: Is there a sunset year as to when the landfill will reach its max capacity?**

**RESPONSE:** We are not aware of when that will/might happen. For more information contact the Lee County Landfill (803) 428-2400.