



# MARK CLARK *Expressway*

## Project Update

During the last few months, the Project Team has collected input on traffic issues, potential benefits and concerns of the proposed project from many groups and individuals. We appreciate the interest and involvement in the project by the public, stakeholders and local, state and federal resource and regulatory agencies. Based on this input, the needs and goals for the project are being defined. During the next few months, additional comments will be collected and the goals for the project will be refined based on this input.

### Goals of this meeting:

To present updated project information and to collect input and comments on:

- Draft of the Project Purpose and Need
- Range of Alternatives presented
- Additional Alternatives that may need to be considered.

### What is the purpose of the project?

The purpose of the project is to *increase the capacity* of the regional transportation system, *improve safety*, and *enhance mobility* in the West Ashley, Johns Island and James Island areas, in an environmentally-sensitive manner.

### Why is the project needed?

#### Capacity

Currently, traffic volumes on several main thoroughfares in the West Ashley, Johns Island and James Island area exceed the capacity of the facility during AM and PM peak hours. The result is congestion, delays and crashes. In addition, many of these thoroughfares serve as the primary link between the study area and other parts of the Charleston metropolitan area. Forecasts of population growth and future demand show continued overtaxing of the roads and transportation links in this area, resulting in more hours of unacceptable congestion, longer delays and more crashes.

Between 2007 and 2030, Woods and Poole, Economics, Inc. estimates that the population of the Charleston area will increase by approximately 48 percent. This population and employment growth will be accompanied by increasing demand for capacity on area roadways as residents travel to and from jobs, schools, shopping and services. As traffic volumes increase, the existing roadways become increasingly congested and additional roadway capacity becomes needed.

Traffic models show that many arterial streets within the

study area currently exceed their capacities and operate at unacceptable levels of congestion. The roads include US 17, Folly Road, St. Andrews Boulevard, Maybank Highway and Main Road. Other roads mentioned by the public during the project scoping process were: Riverland Drive, Central Park Road, River Road, Bohicket Road, Wesley Drive and Calhoun Street

#### Safety

As traffic volumes rise on the study area's transportation system, the likelihood of crashes increases in many ways. The most obvious reason for this is that the addition of more vehicles to a roadway creates more opportunities for crashes to occur. But congestion can also reduce safety in less obvious ways. For instance, in urban areas, drivers find it more difficult to maneuver (changes lanes, turn, etc) because gaps in traffic are infrequent. Congestion can also cause driver confusion and stop and go traffic conditions resulting in rear-end collisions. Therefore, improving the levels of service and reducing congestion on roads within the study area should improve safety and reduce crashes.

#### Regional mobility

The peninsula of downtown Charleston and North Charleston are major employment and commercial centers for the region. West Ashley and James Island are developed with residential and commercial land uses and Johns Island is primarily residential and rural land uses. Because of its unique geography, many of the distinct regions within the study area (James Island, Johns Island, West Ashley, downtown Charleston) are linked to the other regions by only one route and many of these links are congested at peak hours. Additional and/or improved transportation linkages are needed to improve regional mobility and efficiently move people and goods throughout the study area and region.

#### Next steps

The next steps for the Project Team will be to assess input and other potential alternatives collected during the comment period, which runs through January 9, 2009.

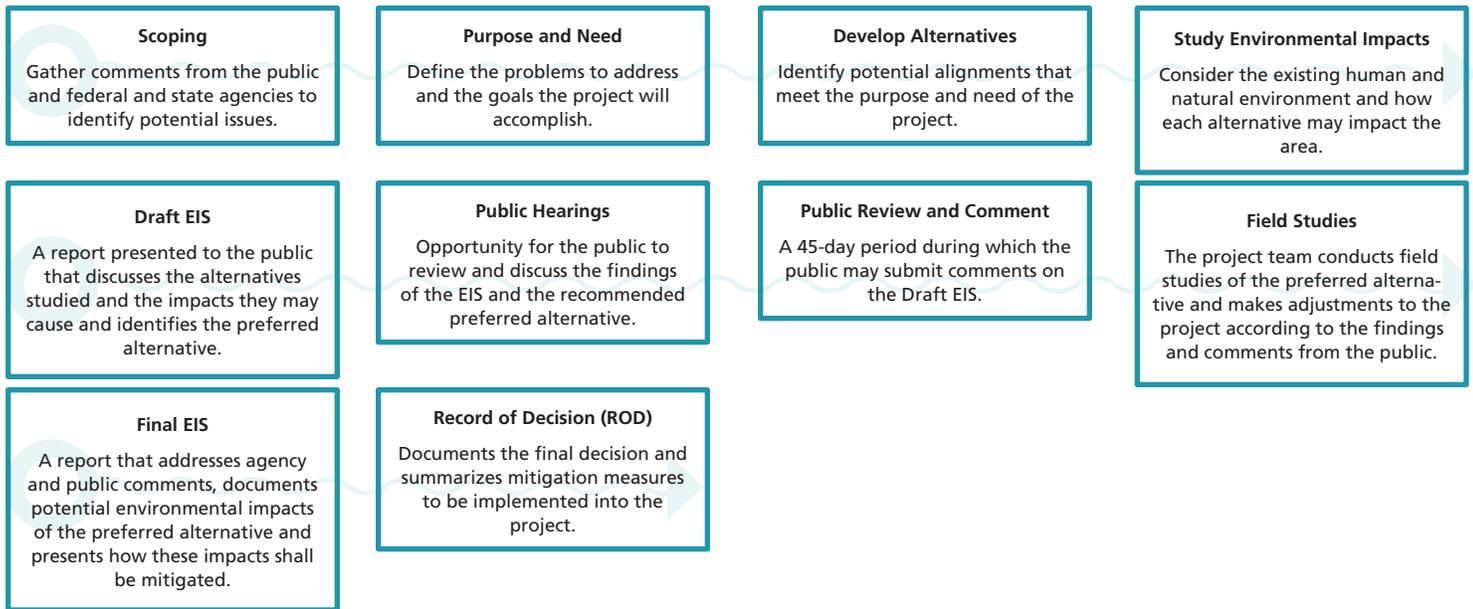
The full *range of alternatives* will be assessed to determine if they will satisfy the Purpose and Need for the project. Those meeting the Purpose and Need and vetted with the evaluation criteria will be considered *reasonable alternatives*, which will be analyzed in more detail in the Draft EIS.

**Thank you!**

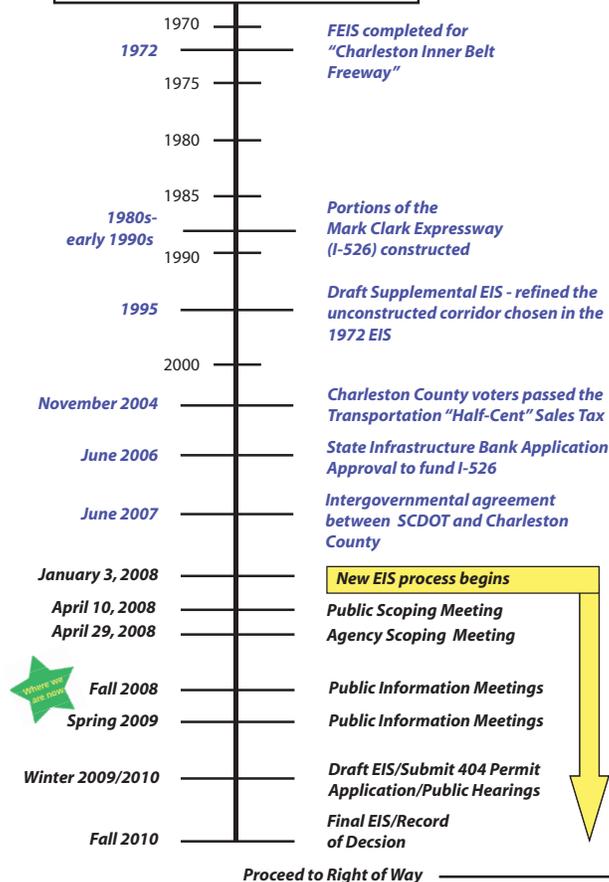
*We would like to thank you for your time and participation in this project. Your comments and questions have been very helpful in making this project a success.*



# The EIS Process Flow Chart



## History/Timeline for the I-526 Mark Clark Expressway



### Keep Your Comments Coming!

**HOTLINE: 1-888-MCE-I526 (1-888-623-4526)**

The project hotline will include a recorded message that will provide information on upcoming project events/meetings, a brief project status and other project contact information. When you call, you may leave a project-related message that will be incorporated into the project file.

**Website: [www.scdot.org/I526](http://www.scdot.org/I526)**

Project information can be found on the website. Comments can also be made via the website.

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