



Memorandum

TO: All Members of the CMCOG **Technical Committee**

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: May 21, 2019

SUBJECT: **Next Meeting-May 28, 2019**

Please be advised that the business of the CMCOG Technical Committee will be conducted on May 28th at 9:30 a.m. in the CMCOG Conference Room. Enclosed, please find an agenda and support materials for your review.

The CMCOG would like to thank you for your continued service and participation. The Technical Committee serves as an integral part of our transportation planning process and is often the first step for review and approval of transportation projects which affect our region. Your continued dedication has been admirable and appreciated.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 803-744-5133 or by email at rsimmons@centralmidlands.org. I look forward to meeting with you on May 28th, please don't forget to mark your calendars!

Enclosures

AGENDA

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

MEETING: TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019

9:30 A.M. TO 10:30 A.M.

CMCOG CONFERENCE ROOM

1. **Welcome, Introductions, and Call to Order R. Simmons**

ACTION

- 2. **Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area PlanR. Simmons**
The Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) in coordination and cooperation with the Town of Blythewood, The Comet and the South Carolina Department of Transportation performed the Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan. The purpose of this land use and transportation plan was to evaluate existing land uses and potential transportation alternatives to address the long-term, multi-modal transportation improvements required to accommodate a potentially significant level of development within and adjacent to the town. AECOM was retained to complete this plan. Staff will present the draft final report for review. (Enclosure 1)

ACTION

- 3. **Video Production Services for Training VideosR. Simmons**
The Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) in coordination and collaboration with the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority (CMRTA) selected and retained Lost Art Communications to develop a series of videos to assist prospective riders when considering public transit options. Some riders who rely on public transit are those with disabilities and seniors, so the videos have been crafted in such a way as to help those with barriers feel more at ease when utilizing public transit. Staff will present this project for review. (Enclosure 2)

ACTION

- 4. **FY 2020 & 2021 UPWP.....R. Simmons**
Every two years, staff develops the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to identify the transportation planning activities that will be undertaken within the current fiscal year. Staff has completed the 2020 & 2021 UPWP and will present it to the committee for review. (Enclosure 3)

5. **Old/New Business R. Simmons**

6. **Public Comments Open**

7. **Adjourn R. Simmons**



Memorandum

TO: All Members of the CMCOG **Technical Committee**

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: May 28, 2019

SUBJECT: Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan

REQUESTED ACTION

The Central Midlands Council of Governments' staff requests a recommendation of approval to adopt the Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Blythewood is a desirable place to live with a high quality of life driven by a small-town feel, strong neighborhoods and proximity to the Columbia Metro Area. With rapid development and the prospect of continued unprecedented growth come transportation challenges. This significant development is expected to impact existing traffic patterns in the Blythewood area by increasing congestion and creating potential safety issues if improvements to roadway infrastructure are not made. By understanding the potential growth patterns in the area, the traffic impacts can be anticipated and mitigated.

Recognizing the rapid growth in the area and the increasing traffic congestion and safety issues, Central Midlands Council of Governments (COG) contracted AECOM to conduct this traffic improvement plan by taking a holistic approach at growth and traffic issues in the area over the next 20 years. AECOM studied the entire Blythewood area and not just the official town limits as much of the growth surrounding Blythewood will have a huge influence on traffic within the town. Therefore, rather than focusing on one particular area or intersection, this study seeks to understand the existing and future growth patterns, in the Blythewood area, and to provide sequential recommendations on improvements that should be considered over the next 20 years.

The Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan can be downloaded from the CMCOG website at www.centralmidlands.org.

ATTACHMENT

Blythewood Traffic Improvement Plan – Executive Summary

Blythewood Traffic Improvement Area Plan - DRAFT

Prepared for:

Central Midlands COG and

Town of Blythewood, South Carolina

May 24, 2019





Executive Summary

The Town of Blythewood is a desirable place to live with a high quality of life driven by a small town feel, strong neighborhoods and proximity to the Columbia Metro Area. With rapid development and the prospect of continued unprecedented growth come transportation challenges. This significant development is expected to impact existing traffic patterns in the Blythewood area by increasing congestion and creating potential safety issues if improvements to roadway infrastructure are not made. By understanding the potential growth patterns in the area, the traffic impacts can be anticipated and mitigated.

Recognizing the rapid growth in the area and the increasing traffic congestion and safety issues, Central Midlands Council of Governments (COG) contracted AECOM to conduct this traffic improvement plan by taking a holistic approach at growth and traffic issues in the area over the next 20 years. AECOM studied the entire Blythewood area and not just the official town limits as much of the growth surrounding Blythewood will have a huge influence on traffic within the town. Therefore, rather than focusing on one particular area or intersection, this study seeks to understand the existing and future growth patterns, in the Blythewood area, and to provide sequential recommendations on improvements that should be considered over the next 20 years.



School Traffic at Bethel Hanberry Elementary

The Study also focused on identifying the right balance between residential and commercial growth, transportation needs and the community's desires for the future. More importantly, seeking the right balance between land uses and increasing transportation demands while maintaining the unique character of the Blythewood area.

While the principal focus of the transportation plan was to address the growing demands placed on the town's roads and streets by developments in the study area, the plan also examined bicycle and pedestrian needs, public transportation and other future plans necessary to accommodate growth and development. This report represents the final deliverable for the study and documents the analysis conducted, its outcomes and potential recommended short-term, mid-term and long-term improvements.

Planning Process

The planning process used to guide the future transportation recommendations for the Town of Blythewood Traffic Improvement Study is outlined below.

- Analyze existing conditions of the transportation system
- Review historical and forecast sociodemographic data
- Engage local stakeholders, real estate professionals, business owners and the general public in discussions on potential solutions to solve Blythewood's transportation challenges
- Examine future transportation needs through traffic modeling efforts
- Identify a comprehensive list of transportation improvements that will address needs
- Develop a prioritized program of transportation improvements



Traffic Analysis

An analysis was conducted of existing conditions to include a review of over 20 intersections, crash data, traffic counts, environmental analysis as well as future projects being planned in the Blythewood area. Land use data was also gathered to be used in the traffic modeling efforts. The 2040 traffic model was developed and used to identify future network deficiencies as well as aiding in the identification of needed improvements throughout the area. The analysis identified six short-term project recommendations, four mid-term project recommendations and four long-term project recommendations. One recommended project in particular, the US 21 and Blythewood Road intersection seemed to come to the forefront of discussions with Blythewood Town Officials, the Stakeholder and Technical Working Groups and the general public.

Stakeholder Engagement

The project team also had 2 different stakeholder teams that met throughout the study. The first team was comprised of agency officials from the following entities: Town of Blythewood, Central Midlands Council of Governments, SCDOT, Richland County and the COMET. The second team of stakeholders was comprised of business leaders representing: local realtors, All State Insurance agent, Essex Homes, Great Southern Home Builders, and others. The groups first met on August 23, 2018 for an interactive meeting with members of the project team presenting information about the overall project and gathering input from the stakeholders.

The stakeholder teams met for the second time on April 9, 2019. The purpose of that meeting was for the project team to present the preliminary recommendations to the stakeholders and gain their feedback.



Yard Sign Advertising Public Meeting

A public information meeting was also held on April 9th from 5:30pm till 7:30pm at Doko Manor in Blythewood. The project team met with citizens to present the recommendations of the study and gather feedback. A computer generated visualization depicting what future improvements in the area would look like was also presented.



Project Recommendations

The following six projects are short-term recommendations for the study area:

Short-Term Recommendations	Improvement
US 321 at Blythewood Road	Add turning lanes
US 21 at Rimer Pond Road	Add turning lanes
US 21 at Farrow Road	Add turning lanes
Langford Road at Trading Post Road	Add turning lanes
Rimer Pond Road at Longtown Road	Add turning lanes
US 21 at Community Road	Install RCUT intersection

The following four projects are mid-term recommendations for the study area:

Mid-Term Recommendation	Improvement
Blythewood Road at Muller Road	Install turn lanes
US 21 at Farrow Road	Realign intersection
Langford Road at Hardscrabble Road	Install Roundabout
Blythewood Road at I-77 NB Ramps	Install signal

The following four projects are long-term recommendations for the study area:

Long-Term Recommendation	Improvement
US 21 at Rimer Pond	Install Turn Lanes (4 lanes on US 21)
US 21 at Farrow Road	Install Turn Lanes (4 lanes on US 21)
Rimer Pond at Longtown Road	Intersection Reconfiguration
Blythewood Road at Langford Road/US 21	Intersection Reconfiguration

VIDEO PRODUCTION SERVICES CMCOG/COMET TRAINING VIDEOS

The Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) in coordination and collaboration with the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority (CMRTA or The COMET) selected and retained the Lost Art Communications team to develop this series of videos to assist prospective riders when considering public transit options. Some riders who rely on public transit are those with disabilities and seniors, so the videos have been crafted in such a way as to help those with barriers feel more at ease when utilizing public transit. Additionally, it is the intent of the COMET to share these videos with staff as a training tool.

The COMET will host these videos on the www.CatchTheCOMET.org website, promote them as marketing tools, and will also use them as tools during training sessions. The videos used the COMET's equipment and staff to the greatest extent possible, with professional and local amateur talent as needed. Locations were jointly selected by the COMET and the Lost Art Communications team. All video and sound, work product or otherwise, created for this project is the property of CMCOG and the COMET.

The series includes the following three videos:

- **How to Plan Your Trip:** an instructional video demonstrating how to use the resources provided by the COMET to plan your transit trip, including reading maps and timetables.
- **How to Ride the COMET:** an instructional video demonstrating how easy and convenient it is to use public transportation in the Central Midlands. This video addresses boarding and deboarding, paying fares, rules for riding the buses, accessibility, use of bicycle racks, and other amenities offered on COMET buses.
- **How to Ride DART:** an instructional video targeted at individuals with disabilities describing the application and ADA eligibility process for the COMET's Dial-A-Ride Transportation (DART), as well as how to request a trip and how to use the DART system.

The series will ultimately include two additional videos, which are currently in production (working titles presented below, subject to change):

- **COMET Technologies and Partnerships:** an instructional video describing the many technological features of the COMET system as well as recently initiated partnerships that add value to the use of the COMET system (such as the partnerships with Uber and Lyft, the new Blue Bike promotion, the ELERT system, etc.)
- **How to Ride the Soda Cap Connector:** an educational video promoting the free Soda Cap Connector service to new riders, especially Downtown Columbia workers, students, and visitors.



Memorandum

TO: All Members of the CMCOG **Technical Committee**

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: May 28, 2019

SUBJECT: **FY 2020 – 2021 UPWP** (*Full document is available for download*)

REQUESTED ACTION

The Central Midlands Council of Governments staff will request a recommendation of approval to adopt the FY 2020 – 2021 UPWP. Please be advised that the draft final report is available on our website for your review.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The 2020 – 2021 COATS Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is based on the COATS's 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan, which was updated and approved by the Policy Committee on September 24, 2015. Emphasis has been placed on developing a program which can be reasonably accomplished with available staff and consultant resources and which is consistent with the priorities of the COATS area. This 2020 – 2021 UPWP emphasizes activities that promote the implementation of the existing plan. The major projects to be completed in this two year timeframe include:

Regional Resiliency Plan

This project consists of developing a plan that will provide best practices and strategies that will reduce the vulnerability of the existing transportation infrastructure to natural disasters.

Consultant: TBA

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: December 2020

Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan and Travel Demand Model Update

This project consists of updating our Long-Range Transportation Plan and Travel Demand Model using state-of-the-practice techniques to forecast needs in our transportation system.

Consultant: TBA

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: September 2020

Regional Congestion Management Plan

This project consists of updating our congestion management plan using state-of-the-practice techniques to develop mitigation strategies that will reduce congestion in our transportation system.

Consultant: TBA

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: September 2020

Saluda Greenway Feasibility Study

This project consists of conducting a feasibility and environment analysis of the lower Saluda Greenway.

Consultant: TBA

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: March 2020

Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

This project consists of updating our Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan that will identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation.

Consultant: RLS & Associates

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: June 2020

Short Range Transit Plan, Origin, Destination, and Demographic Survey, & Comprehensive Operational Analysis

This project consists of developing a transit development plan that will improve the efficiency of the current transit system and provide a regional outlook for the future transit system.

Consultant: TBA

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: August 2020

Regional Bike Share Feasibility Study

This project consists of developing a bike share implementation plan that will work in concert and assist in the implementation of the bike and pedestrian master plans that have been developed by CMCOG.

Consultant: TBA

Project Manager: Reginald Simmons Estimated Completion Date: June 2020