



Memorandum

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

FROM: Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director

DATE: August 15, 2023

SUBJECT: **Next Meeting – August 22, 2023**

Please be advised that the business of the CMCOG Technical Committee will be conducted on **August 22nd at 9:30 a.m.** Enclosed, please find an agenda and support materials for your review.

Please note that this meeting will be held virtually using a Zoom platform. The zoom link can be found on the attached agenda.

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 reviewing 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 **August 22nd**, please don't forget to mark your calendars!

Enclosures

AGENDA

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

MEETING: TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2023

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

OVERALL AGENDA

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

2. **Update on the Columbia East Traffic Improvement Area Plan..... R. Simmons**
The Columbia East Traffic Improvement Area Plan is a Land Use and Transportation Plan (“Plan”) that will 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 project area. The primary goal of this Plan is to find the most cost-effective transportation solutions that will coordinate with and support planned development in the area in a compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use manner. (Enclosure 1)

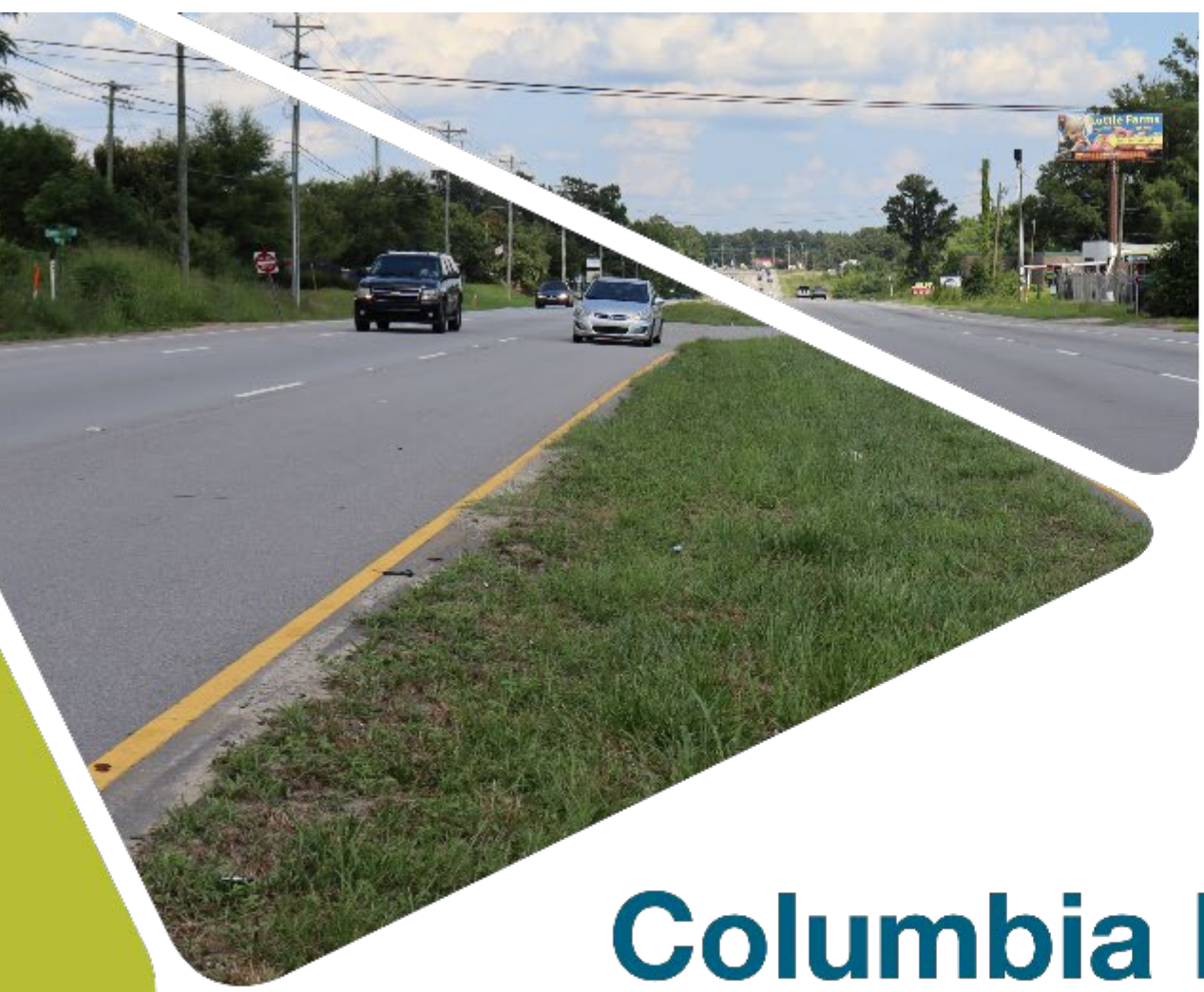
- ACTION** → 3. **2020 – 2027 TIP Amendment – Assembly Street Railroad Project..... R. Simmons**
The City of Columbia is working in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Transportation to bring the Assembly Street Railroad Separation Project to design and construction. The CMCOG/COATS MPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan proposes a railroad bridge over Assembly Street near Whaley Street which would remove five grade crossings. The comprehensive Assembly Street project will eliminate 15 grade crossings. Currently, funding totals \$40 million via Federal, State and City funds. The city is requesting this project be placed in the 2020 – 2027 TIP to continue their development efforts and strengthen their ability to build a more robust funding package. (Enclosure 2)

4. **Update on SCDOT Managed Transportation Planning Projects..... Jim Walden**
SCDOT staff will provide an update on SCDOT managed transportation planning projects in the COATS MPO Area. Updates on the US 76 Corridor Feasibility Study, Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plans, and Congestion Management Plan will be discussed.

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

6. **Public Comments..... Open**

7. **Adjourn..... R. Simmons**



Columbia East Traffic Improvement Area Plan



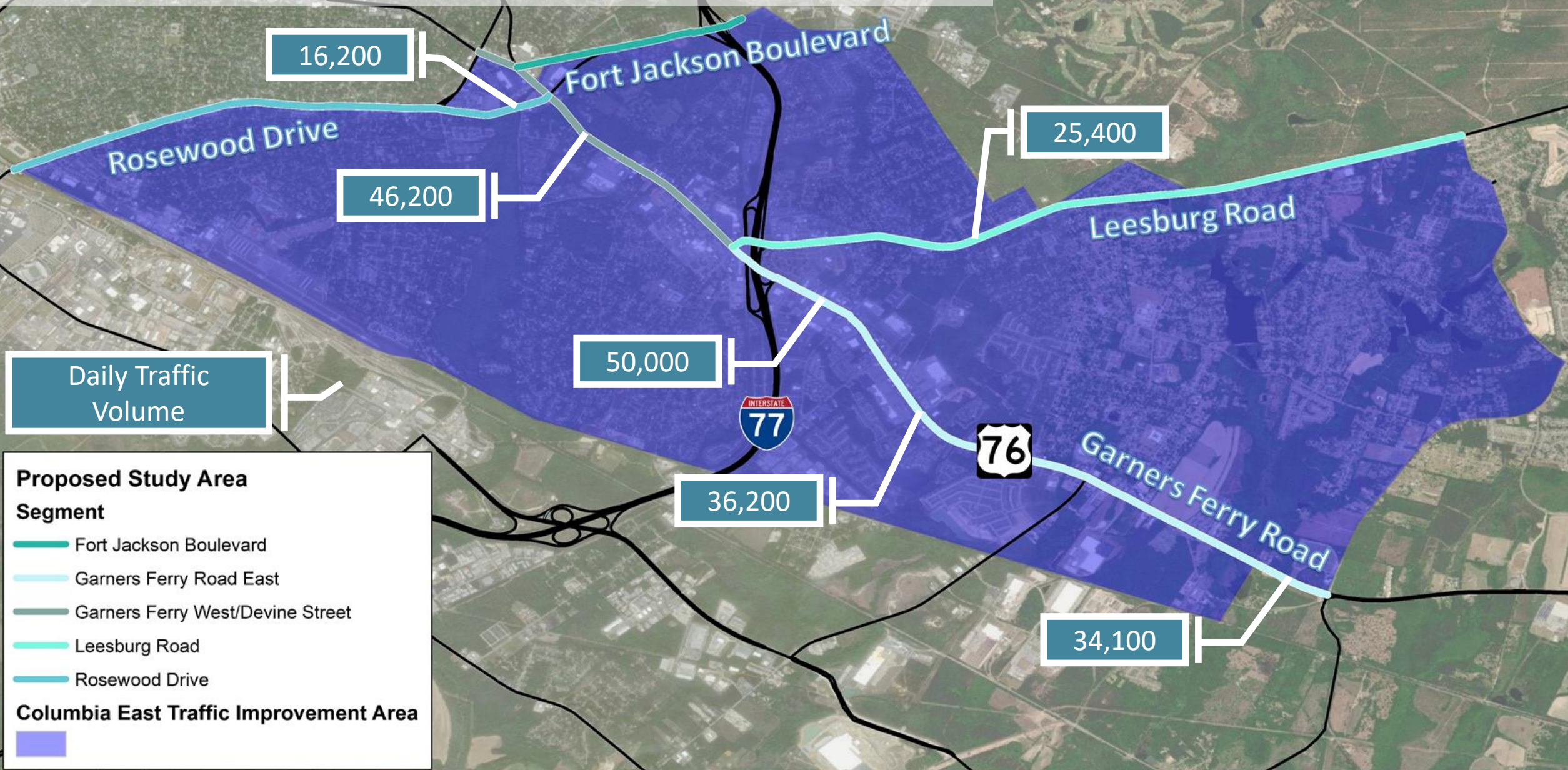
August 22, 2023

Kimley»Horn

Project Team

- Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) – Project Manager
- Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. – Consultant Project Manager
 - The Boudreaux Group – Land Use and Visioning
 - Three Oaks Engineering – Environmental Assessment
 - DAD N Associates – Data Collection

Project Study Area Boundaries



Daily Traffic Volume

Proposed Study Area Segment

- Fort Jackson Boulevard
- Garners Ferry Road East
- Garners Ferry West/Devine Street
- Leesburg Road
- Rosewood Drive

Columbia East Traffic Improvement Area

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Contact:

Joe Robertson

Kimley-Horn

Joseph.Robertson@kimley-horn.com

803-403-8557



COLUMBIA EAST
TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Columbia's Southeast Gateway

Public Workshop

Columbia East Traffic Improvement Area Plan

Please join us for a workshop to provide your input on transportation, land use, and potential solutions for southeast Columbia!

5:00PM – 7:00PM

Tuesday, August 29, 2023

Richland Library Southeast

7421 Garners Ferry Road

Columbia, SC 29209



Engineering Division
PO Box 147 | Columbia, SC 29217 | (803) 545-3300

August 3, 2023

Mr. Reginald Simmons
Central Midlands Council of Governments
236 Stoneridge Drive
Columbia, SC 29210

RE: Request to place Assembly Street Rail Separation Project in the 2020 – 2027 Transportation Improvement Program

Dear Mr. Simmons,

The City of Columbia is working in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Transportation to bring the Assembly Street Railroad Separation Project to design and construction. The CMCOG/COATS MPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan proposes a railroad bridge over Assembly Street near Whaley Street which would remove five grade crossings. The comprehensive Assembly Street project will eliminate 15 grade crossings. Currently, funding totals \$40 million via Federal, State and City funds. The City is requesting this project be placed in the 2020 – 2027 TIP in order to continue our development efforts and strengthen our ability to build a more robust funding package. Our financial breakdown and project components are listed below:

The current funding package is as follows:

- \$5 million - Repurposed Assembly Street Railroad Consolidation ISTEAA Authorization 1991, 2003 Appropriations Act, 2004 Appropriations Act and 2006 Appropriations Act.
- \$5 million - City of Columbia
- \$30 million - South Carolina Department of Commerce

The city is requesting for this project to be included in the 2020 -2027 TIP with funding for the following phases:

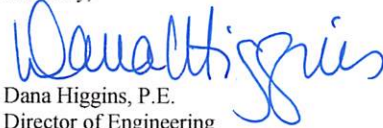
- PE – 2023 – \$5 million
- PE – 2024 – \$18 million
- ROW – 2024 – \$17 million

Preliminary engineering has already begun through the repurposed earmarks. The environmental analysis is currently being conducted with a Finding of No Significant Impact expected by spring of 2024.

Once that has been received, the city intends to begin surveying and engineering design plans in FY 2024. Once finalized, right of way acquisition will begin. We currently do not have enough funding to complete the construction phase but with this inclusion into TIP, it will strengthen our opportunities to increase our funding package.

Please let us know if you would like to review this project in greater detail. Any questions or comments should be directed to me at 803-545-3285.

Sincerely,



Dana Higgins, P.E.
Director of Engineering
City of Columbia

cc: Teresa Wilson, City Manager
Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager
Clint Shealy, PE, Assistant City Manager
Missy Gentry, PE Assistant City Manager
Joey McIntyre, PE SCDOT



Assembly St. Railroad Separation Project



ASSEMBLY STREET RAILROAD SEPARATION PROJECT

Information Packet:

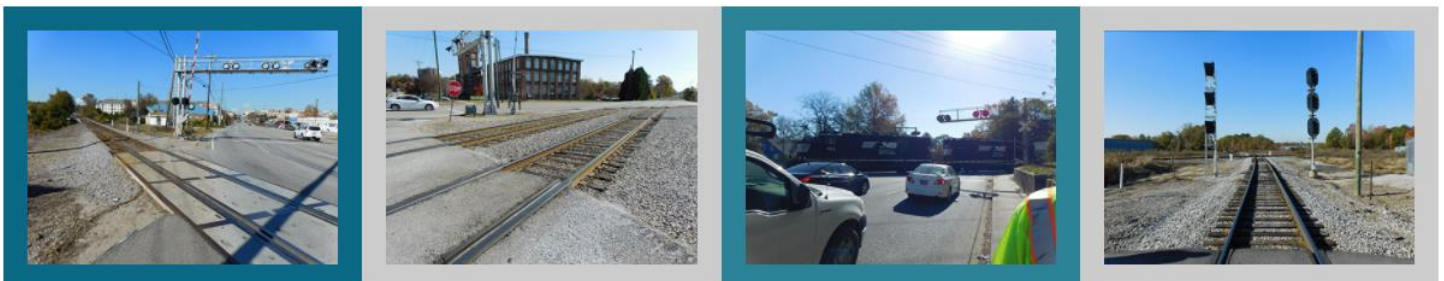
Purpose

Components

Status

Potential Funding Sources

07/28/23





Assembly St. Railroad Separation Project

Purpose

Columbia is the crossroads of the state of South Carolina with government, industry and education all coming together in the Capital City. Thousands of people go to work here, attend college here, and serve the people of South Carolina here in various capacities. With that comes thousands of commuters coming to the City daily, and thousands more on the weekends for conventions and events. Assembly Street is a heavily traveled artery and the combination of increased vehicular traffic congestion, freight rail volume and slow train traffic speeds results in unacceptable delays (both to vehicles and trains), increased air and noise pollution, and increased danger to pedestrians.



The Assembly Street Railroad Separation Project and Huger Street Connector seeks to address one of the state's highest profile traffic areas where both vehicle and train traffic meet on a daily basis. Located adjacent to Williams Brice Stadium and minutes from the State House, this project will separate train and vehicular traffic permanently, allowing both to move freely through Columbia.

Project Components

Although the preferred alternative has not been selected, the below description focuses on one of the leading alternatives. A map of this option is on the next page of this flyer.

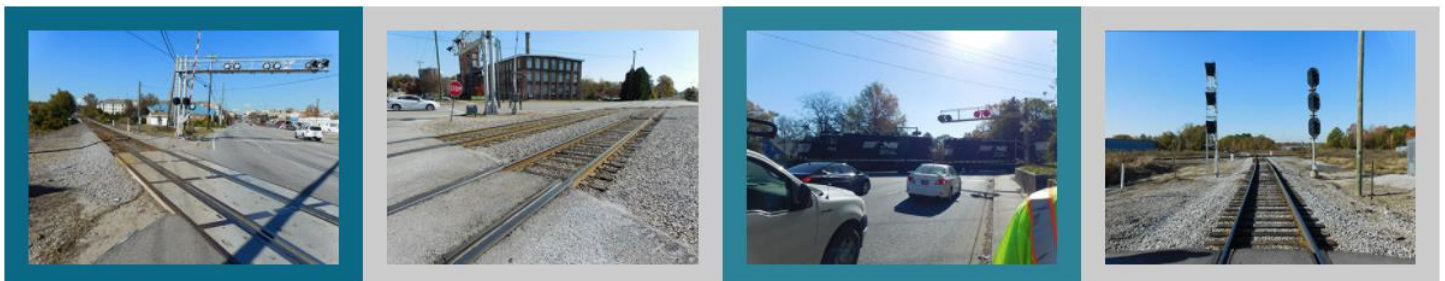
Alternative A (Formerly 320): Eliminates 15 grade crossings (6 via horizontal; 9 via raised profile). Assembly Street would be lowered and the rail tracks would be elevated at Catawba and Whaley Streets. The existing at grade crossings at Dreyfuss and Assembly (near Capital City Stadium) and Rosewood and Assembly (near the Fairgrounds) would be removed. Road closures would occur for Lincoln and Flora Streets. The rail line crossing Assembly Street near the California Dreaming Restaurant (400 block of Assembly Street) will remain – the low volume of train traffic has minimal impact on vehicular congestion.

Huger Street Connector:

As part of the project, a proposed new vehicular road with bridge over the current rail line would be built connecting Huger Street with Wayne Street. The at grade crossing at Huger Street would remain for local traffic.

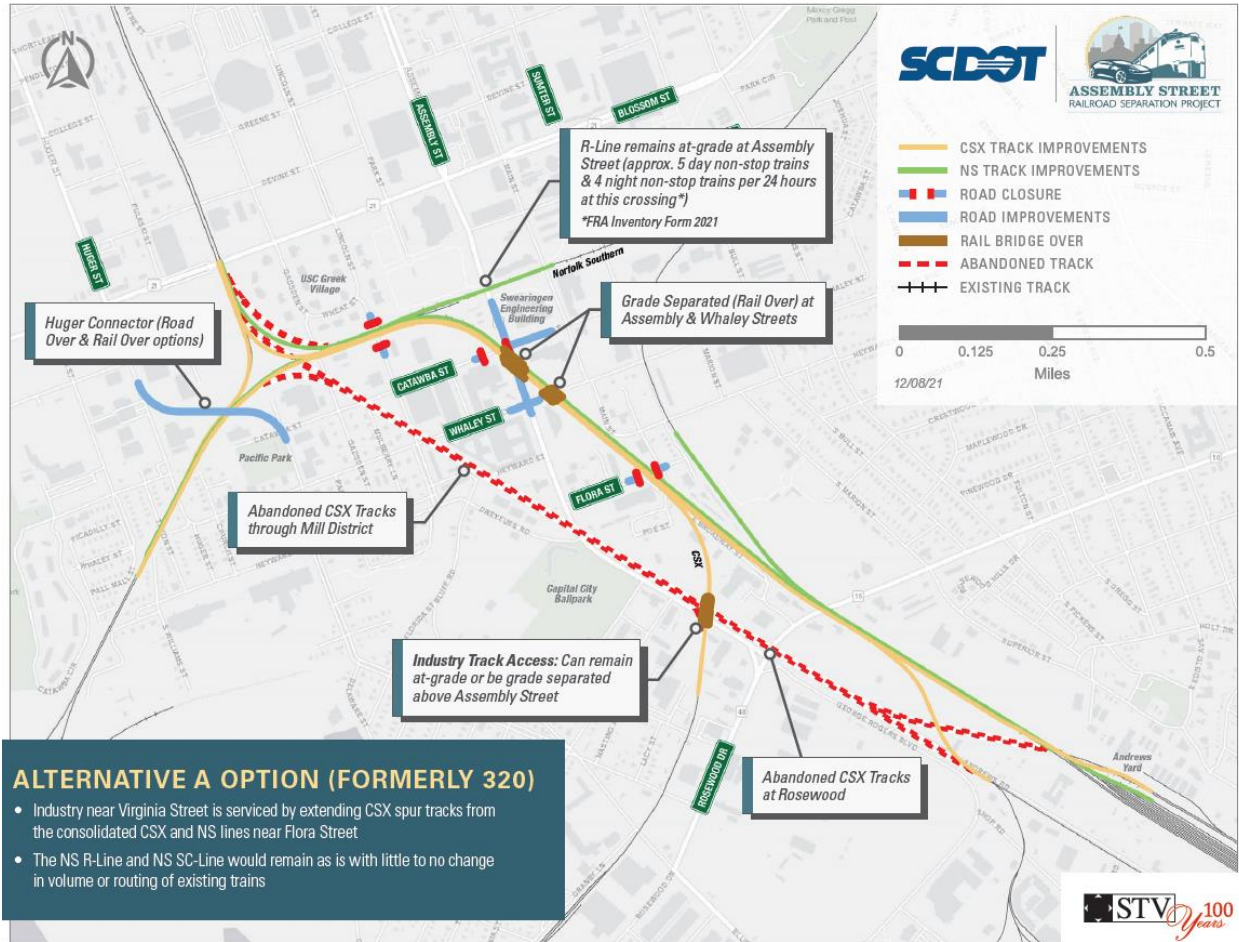
Status

The City of Columbia and the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) are collaborating to advance the project forward while securing funding for the next steps. Preliminary Engineering Agreements have been established with CSX and Norfolk Southern. The railroads have provided comments to alternatives and SCDOT reviewing them internally. The EA (Environmental Assessment) and the FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) are expected to be complete by 2nd quarter 2024. Because of the preliminary status of the project, a final project cost estimate has not yet been determined. However, the current estimated range as provided by the SCDOT is \$ – \$3 million for the entire project.





Assembly St. Railroad Separation Project

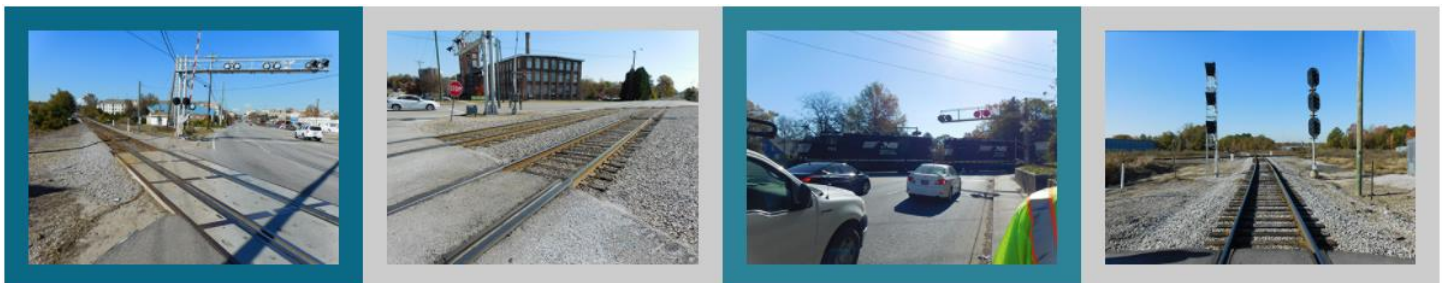


A larger map can be found at

www.assemblystreetrailproject.com.

More Information

The South Carolina Department of Transportation has created a website where citizens can provide input and learn more about the project. It is at www.assemblystreetrailproject.com.





Assembly St. Railroad Separation Project

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The \$1.2 Trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law in November 2021, includes \$550 billion in new funding to rebuild roads and bridges, water infrastructure, resilience, internet, and more. Congress intends the competitive grant programs to fund transformational and generational projects.

The Assembly Street Project falls squarely in this category. It also meets most, if not all, of the Administration's equity, climate, and state of good repair goals and is a project of regional significance with broad community and regional support across a diverse group of stakeholders.

Competitive Transportation Grant Programs

IIJA provides funding over five years (FY 2022-FY 2026) as follows.

- Mega Projects: \$1 billion per year for FY 2022-FY 2026 (total of \$5 billion over 5 years)
- INFRA: \$1.64 billion per year for FY 2022-FY 2024 and \$1.54 billion per year for FY 2025 and FY 2026 (total of \$8 billion over 5 years)
- CRISI: \$1 billion per year FY 2022-FY 2026 (total of \$5 billion over 5 years)
- Railroad Grade Crossing Discretionary: \$600 million per FY 2022-FY 2026 (total of \$3 billion over 5 years)

Note that these funds are either Highway Trust Fund contract authority or General Fund advance appropriations provided by IIJA. Congress could choose to provide additional funding for any of these programs in any given fiscal year, similar to how they provided an additional \$775 million for RAISE this year.

Potential Grant Opportunity Schedule

202	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
FONSI		Finding of No Significant Impact (expected completion 2Q Spring 2024)									
INFRA/Mega											
CRISI											
SCTIB		Ongoing									

Funding Options

Mega/INFRA is the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America funding opportunity made available through the U.S. Department of Transportation for highway and rail projects.

1. Application due by [redacted], 2022 with request of \$1 [redacted] million
2. Match requirement: 40% (\$ [redacted] million)

CRISI is the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Grant funding opportunity made available through the Federal Railroad Administration.

1. Application submitted December 1, 2022
2. 20% match required, 50% preferred
3. Can be phased (PE/NEPA – 30% design)

SCTIB is the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank funding opportunity made available through the South Carolina State Government.

1. Due – No date posted
2. 25% match required
3. Match funds can be federal or local

Railroad Grade Crossing Elimination is a funding opportunity made available through the Federal Railroad Administration.

1. Application submitted October 4, 2022
2. Match requirement: 20%

