



DRAFT COMMUNITY MITIGATION PLAN OVERVIEW

This Draft Community Mitigation Plan Overview includes conceptual mitigation that was developed based off input received through the public engagement process and the Community Advisory Council. The conceptual mitigation will be refined as the project progresses. Additional details and new commitments may be added through coordination with the City of North Charleston, Community Advisory Council, Berkley-Charleston-Dorchester- Council of Governments, other local entities, and the residents. The final components of the Community Mitigation Plan will be included in the combined Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD), which is scheduled for completion in Late Fall 2021.

FOCUSED OUTREACH

Community Advisory Council

SCDOT will continue to support the Community Advisory Council (CAC) which was established in September 2019. The CAC consists of residents and property-owners from the impacted Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, who serve the following roles during the project development phase:

- (a) share individual knowledge and perspectives with the project team;
- (b) provide input on project-related impacts and proposed mitigation;
- (c) serve as a voice for the EJ neighborhood residents; and,
- (d) share project-related information.

SCDOT will continue to support the CAC, through the approval of the FEIS/ROD, by facilitating their regularly scheduled monthly meetings, providing technical assistance, and providing administrative support as needed.

Organizational Training

SCDOT will provide support for training to transition the Community Advisory Council to a Project Oversight Committee (POC). This training will also be made available to residents of the impacted EJ communities who are interested in joining the POC or other groups looking to initiate community advocacy.

Community Office

SCDOT will maintain a Community Office throughout the project development, final design, and right-of-way phases of the project. The Community Office will continue to be staffed with a full-time Office Manager, Community Liaisons/Outreach Specialists, and part-time Right-of-Way Specialists, who will be available to provide community residents with real-time project and property acquisition information. The Community Office will also be available to serve as meeting space for the CAC and the POC. The Community Office will remain in operation until the completion of the Right-of-Way Acquisition Phase.



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RESIDENTIAL DISPLACEMENTS

Affordable Housing

SCDOT is partnering with the South Carolina State Housing and Finance and Development Authority to create one hundred (100) affordable multi-family rental housing units within the vicinity of the impacted EJ communities. Displaced families that qualify for the affordable units will receive priority placement in new units.”

Additionally, SCDOT is conducting early acquisition of vacant lots within and in the vicinity of the impacted EJ communities in order to provide affordable single-family or multi-family owner occupied housing options for families displaced by the I-526 LCC-West project. These units would be available for both displaced homeowners and those displaced tenants that desire to move into homeownership as a part of the relocation process. SCDOT is investigating provisions and partnerships that will enable the replacement housing to remain affordable in the future. Displaced families that qualify for the affordable units will receive priority placement in new units.

Financial Literacy and First-time Home Buyer Counseling: SCDOT will develop partnerships with the local organizations to provide financial literacy and first-time home buyer counseling to displaced residents, which could assist them in securing residential loans and transitioning from renters to homeowners. The counseling will be initiated during first quarter 2021.

RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Facilities and Amenities

SCDOT will fund the construction of replacement recreational facilities and associated infrastructure to mitigate project impacts and satisfy Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) requirements. SCDOT will acquire parcels located within the affected neighborhoods and provide funding to the City of North Charleston who will oversee construction of one large, centrally located community center complex and two pocket parks within the impacted EJ neighborhoods. Final details of the amenities to be included in the community center and the pocket park will be included in the FEIS/ROD. Construction of the new centrally located community center and the pocket parks will be completed prior to the start of construction of the I-526 LCC-West improvements.

Programs and Activities

Prior to the approval of the FEIS/ROD, SCDOT and the City of North Charleston will develop an intergovernmental agreement outlining the programs, services, structural components, and arrangements for long-term operation and maintenance of the replacement community centers and recreational facilities. The agreement will include language that gives residents of the communities served by the community and recreational centers priority in areas such as program enrollment/participation, reserving facility space, and volunteer opportunities.

The City of North Charleston will continue to look for qualified candidates that live in the impacted environmental justice neighborhoods. The City of North Charleston will post job openings within the neighborhoods and encourage the CAC and neighborhood councils to submit qualified applicants.

Final details related to programs, amenities, and community member employment opportunities at the recreational facilities will be included in the FEIS/ROD.

Connectivity and Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety



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SCDOT will develop a plan to improve bike and pedestrian connectivity, safety, and mobility between the replacement community centers and recreation facilities, the surrounding EJ communities, and transit stops along Rivers Avenue. These improvements may include new and upgraded sidewalks, improved lighting, crosswalks/pedestrian signage, traffic calming, and CARTA transit stop improvements.

EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

College Aid Initiative

Prior to construction, SCDOT will develop a partnership with educational institutions and provide up to \$50,000 to fund a scholarship program. The scholarship program will be for high school and college students from the impacted EJ communities or other adjacent EJ communities that intend to or currently attend higher educational institutions.

School-to-Work Program

SCDOT will develop partnerships with educational institutions to develop school-to-work employment programs with the goal of enhancing employment opportunities within the fields of construction, engineering, and transportation. During the right-of-way acquisition phase, SCDOT will seek to hire up to ten (10) high school or college students from the impacted EJ neighborhoods or other adjacent EJ communities to work as summer interns.

Pre-employment Training

This program will be established prior to construction to provide training and job readiness skills to individuals from the affected communities. SCDOT will determine the number of participants required completing the program and the program will be the responsibility of the contractor. The contractor's program plan and curriculum will be reviewed and approved by SCDOT. Graduates of this program will be considered for participation in On-The-Job Training (OJT) Program.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

COMMUNITY HISTORY PRESERVATION STUDY

SCDOT will fund a study to document the cultural history and character of the impacted EJ communities through the support of a qualified historian and photographer. The study efforts will include collecting oral history, archival research, collection of historic photography, and the development of a report that will be available for viewing online and at the community center. The Community History Preservation Study will be coordinated with the schedule for the Community Livability study and be complete within two years of the FEIS/ROD.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCE PLAN

SCDOT will develop a Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan that will identify a set of improvements to address bicycle and pedestrian safety, access to community centers, enhanced street aesthetics, project-related stormwater improvements, and traffic calming measures that would be implemented as part of the project. The Community Infrastructure Enhancement Plan will be completed by the approval of the FEIS/ROD.