

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

November 18, 2025

A meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Committee was held on this date, beginning at 3:06 p.m. in person in the Council Chambers at 80 Broad Street and over Zoom.

Committee Members: Councilmember Seekings (Chair), Councilmember Brady 3:09 p.m. (Vice-Chair), Councilmember Gregg, Councilmember McBride, and Mayor Cogswell

Also Present: Michael Mathis, Robert Somerville, Elizabeth Dieck, Deja Knight-McMillan, Magalie Creech, Melissa Cruthirds, Councilmember Tinkler, Councilmember Shealy, Councilmember Appel, Julia Copeland, Hampton Logan, Jason Kronsberg, Trace Whetsell, and Mae-Lee Cowell
Chair Seekings called the meeting to order

Invocation

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence led by Chair Seekings.

Approval of the November 12, 2025, meeting minutes

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the November 12, 2025, Traffic and Transportation meeting minutes.

Discussion Regarding E-Bikes Operating within the City of Charleston and Potential Ordinance

Chair Seekings said they had preliminary discussions about adding e-bikes to the existing City ordinance. They also wanted to align the City ordinance with state legislation on e-bikes. It was suggested that the committee have a brief discussion to include this in the regulations regarding e-bikes. Direct staff, the Legal Department, Mr. Somerville, Mr. Mathis, and the Police Department to collaborate on this goal.

Councilmember Gregg said they receive complaints about e-bikes on city sidewalks and streets. Mount Pleasant had recently enacted an ordinance to implement restrictions, which required additional registration, proof of liability insurance, and higher fines. Their goal was to increase fines for riding on a city sidewalk, which was currently \$50. They need to develop a plan for enforcement because they have limited police resources. Their concern is that someone could get injured by an e-bike in the future.

Chair Seekings said they lacked a clear definition of an e-bike in their City Code. There were many different versions of motor, pedal-assist, and motorized bicycles. They had initial discussions with Chief Walker and his team, ensuring that whatever they included in the regulations was enforceable and effectively enforced.

Public Participation and Discussion Regarding City of Charleston Transportation Priorities for Potential Future Transportation Sales Tax Referendum

Chair Seekings said they were discussing specific priorities for the committee to review with the City Council, which would then be forwarded to the County, regarding what they would like to see included in the referendum that would raise or extend the existing half-cent sales tax.

Public Participants

Mr. McGee, President of the Harleston Village Association, said that when the Council approved the MUC overlay to support the expansion of the medical district for the National Cancer Center, they urged the developers to address the transportation and flooding challenges that would accompany that growth. Calhoun Street was already struggling under current conditions and would often close during heavy rain, bringing the medical district to a halt. This corridor carried 20,000 vehicles daily, including patients, caregivers, residents, and regional commuters. When Calhoun Street shut down, the entire peninsula felt its impact. The pressure increased with the expansion of MUC and the construction of new hotels. The future LCRT terminus at West End Development would be located on Calhoun Street. Without a coordinated road and flood management plan, access to emergency services would become unreliable, risking the livability of neighborhoods, the integrity of existing road infrastructure, and approved investments. The broader MUC community needed infrastructure capable of supporting the degree of growth expected. Flooding and congestion were not just minor inconveniences; they signified systematic failures that compromised safety, mobility, and economic vitality.

Lisa Jones, Director of Advocacy Historic Charleston, said that, as a nonprofit advocacy organization focused on community, culture, people, and places, they are invested in this decision that will influence how they enhance their infrastructure network. They aim to support a referendum that is specific, transparent, and well-planned. A strong referendum would provide adequate funding for green space, bike and pedestrian projects, transit, and drainage. Concerning the projects presented to the public by the City, the HTF would back upgrades to Lockwood Drive, Hagood Avenue, East Bay Street, Morrison Drive, and the Calhoun Street corridor, along with design improvements for Huger Street. Overall, they support transportation and infrastructure projects that improve resilience, drainage, walkability, connectivity, and urban design.

John Zlogar, Representative of the Johns Island Task Force, said that the road project should lead to visible safety improvements and reduced congestion in the near term. They supported the Johns Island projects listed by the Mayor. Adequate funding should be allocated for land conservation. The protected lands not only safeguard the environment but also reduce sprawl and lower infrastructure costs for roads and other facilities. The tax should be limited to a maximum of 10 years, allowing the County to demonstrate it can complete projects on schedule.

Katie Zimmerman, Executive Director of Charleston Moves, discussed all the projects, including not just project prioritization but also considering whether the County would have an annual allocation program in the future and how it would coordinate with this greater effort. They recommended making safety their top priority when assessing projects. Green belt investment should decrease future traffic congestion, and widenings were deemed unsustainable. They asked if they could focus on shifting the mode share for a better return on investment because road widenings are a short-term fix for traffic congestion. Widenings are expensive, resource- and time-intensive, and cause negative problems. They created a list that centered on the Ashley River Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge as the hub, and to evaluate network connectivity across all districts.

Jim Hemphill, from the East Coast Greenway Alliance, explained that their approach to programming the bike and pedestrian components of the TST was based on how the TST had

been managed previously. They focused on addressing those gaps to improve the overall network's health, much like their approach to understanding how the vehicle transportation system operates and functions across the County. They did not hear much discussion about the need for dedicated maintenance funding for sidewalks, trails, and multi-use paths. They believed the City had done a good job ensuring that private development contributed to building the sidewalk and multi-use path network. The developers who built those paths transferred ownership to the City and were responsible for maintenance. As more of these paths were added, funding for maintenance became increasingly important. One idea they considered was creating a separate allocation program for maintenance, which they could discuss with their counterparts and other municipalities.

Sandy Fowler, Representative of the Radcliffe Burrough Neighborhood Association, said their neighborhood group wanted to offer support because this was a critical issue blocking the entire crossing of the peninsula, which would provide access to the medical university. They also wanted to strongly advocate for the inclusion of the Calhoun corridor flood mitigation sales tax request.

Sean Coughlin said he, his wife, and children live on Cypress Street. He was working on a new tech project called Lookout, a product designed to deter unsafe neighborhood driving using accountability, playfulness, and humor. He read a few parent testimonials related to the problem they were tackling. Someone from Wagner Terrace yelled and made a hand gesture, arms up, thumbs down. If the situation were extreme, they would get the license plate and call 411 or 911. At Hampton Park Terrace, someone dropped an explosive loudly in their direction, and when upset, the old bird flipped up. Someone else would scream at or spit on the cars as they passed by. In Radcliffe Borough, residents felt helpless in ensuring kids' safety in the street. The issue was unsafe driving, and was linked to infrastructure ideas like widening and adding sidewalks.

They received 36 comments requesting support for Calhoun corridor improvements, better bike lanes, and pedestrian sidewalks along Spurl Avenue. Requests included traffic calming measures and intersection upgrades at Anderson and Camp, flood mitigation on Brockman, and efforts to reduce traffic congestion caused by Starbucks at the corner of Rivers Point Row and Folly Road. Community members also asked for traffic measures in the Creek Point subdivision and other area improvements, funding for Calhoun Street drainage, and the use of the green transportation pyramid for decision-making. The council and the committee were urged to move forward with bike and pedestrian improvements on James Island, including more and safer crossings and infrastructure along Folly Road. Additional suggestions included adding Washington Street to the list of improvements, which were under consideration for East Bay and Concord, creating three connections between Ashley River Road and Glenn McConnell Parkway, and upgrading all one-way streets on the peninsula to two-way streets, along with improvements to Harborview Road, Folly Road, Lockwood Drive, and Hagood Avenue. Support was voiced for all drainage and resiliency efforts, including Calhoun West and perimeter protection through the transportation sales tax. The City was encouraged to research and implement more traffic calming measures and road improvements in Elliot Borough. All increases in traffic and road projects were opposed. There was also a focus on prioritizing infrastructure and land preservation before approving further development, with requests for road and traffic enhancements throughout West Ashley and the peninsula. A letter from Councilmember Leslie Skardon urged the committee to address multiple critical infrastructure needs on James Island. Finally, a resolution from the Harleston Village Association expressed support for the Calhoun corridor improvements.

Mayor Cogswell stated that the current population was a key factor in determining where to prioritize and allocate funding. The points made by Charleston Moves were that widening often did not work, but in this case, having two lanes exiting the island would have a significant impact.

The next steps involved ensuring this was about more than just Charleston. They discussed other communities along the west side of the Ashley River, such as Folly Beach, Kiawah, Seabrook, and the Town of James Island. Their goal was to join the conversation so their voices could be heard. They wanted to share their priorities and find areas of common interest. They planned to meet with the newly elected council members to discuss their priorities and include them in this effort. They also contacted a consultant to get updated figures on the road projects. They had spoken with the county, which showed willingness and interest in helping, and they were optimistic about resolving these issues so they wouldn't become problems. When discussing revenue sources, they noted that a significant portion of their income came from commercial properties, not just sales tax revenue.

Chair Seekings mentioned that people notice the small details, and they had a chance to address these with the half-cent sales tax to complete projects on time. This will make a difference in their neighborhoods, benefit their constituents, and allow people to see, feel, and touch the results.

Councilmember McBride inquired about the 2024 sales tax, asking whether this level of integration was part of that process or if it represented a significant improvement.

Chair Seekings said it was not. They hoped this would have a positive effect on those who go to the polls on election day to vote for or against an extension of a vital part of their revenue streams for infrastructure.

Mayor Cogswell said they met with all three mayors, as well as Superintendent Anita Huggins, to discuss this. There was strong support for the initiative, and they understood the need to be organized and thoughtful, which they committed to.

With there being no further business, the committee adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

Clerk of Council's Office

Donna Constance