

RESOLUTION 2022/ 39

A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2022 TRANSPORTATION SALES TAX PROGRAM

The County Council of Beaufort County (the “*Council*”), the governing body of the Beaufort County, South Carolina (the “*County*”), has made the following findings of fact:

WHEREAS, the County Council established a citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (the “*TAC*”) on February 7th (Resolution 2022/11); and

WHEREAS, the TAC was charged with developing a recommendation to Council regarding a possible 2022 Transportation Sales Tax Referendum. The three objectives of the committee included a project list, the amount to be collected, and the time period of collecting the tax; and

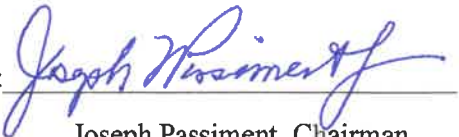
WHEREAS, the TAC developed a project list as requested and attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, in addition to three main objectives of the TAC, the committee provided additional recommendations regarding the implementation for Council’s consideration. The additional recommendations are fully described in a memorandum to Council as drafted by the TAC Chairman, Dean Moss and is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY, adopts the additional recommendations of the TAC regarding the implementation of the possible 2022 Transportation Sales Tax Program.

ADOPTED, this 23rd Day of May, 2022.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BEAUFORT COUNTY

BY: 
Joseph Passiment, Chairman

ATTEST:



Sarah W. Brock, Clerk to Council

Proposed 2022 Sales Tax Program

One Penny for 10 years with Mid-High Growth = \$700m

- Greenbelts (**\$60m**)

- Mass Transit; including Marine Transport (**\$25m**)

- Project Programs
 - Safety (**\$50m**)
 - Dirt Road Paving (**\$50m**)
 - Resurfacing (**\$60m**)
 - Pathways (**\$50m**)
 - Transportation Technologies/Access Roads (**\$50m**)
 - Resiliency (**\$20m**)

- Big Projects
 - SC 170 (**\$80m**)
 - Ribaut Road/Interconnectivity Projects (**\$75m**)
 - SC 46 (**\$20m**)
 - Hilton Head Project – Intersection Improvements, Pathways, and Resurfacing (**\$40m**)
 - US 278 Corridor Improvement/Enhancements (**\$40m**)
 - Lady’s Island Corridor (**\$40m**)
 - Bluffton Regional Road Network (**\$40m**)

EXHIBIT A

Greenbelts: Acquisition of property to establish a balance between environmental protection and rapid development growth.

Mass Transit: Funding multimodal transportation, to include marine transport, for a more robust and equitable public transportation system.

Project Programs:

- **Safety:** Safety improvements along roadways and intersections to include pedestrian accommodations.
- **Dirt Road Paving:** Paving of county-owned dirt roads throughout the County.
- **Resurfacing:** Road resurfacing and preservation of ALL roadways (State, County, and municipality-owned) throughout the County. The goal is to increase the overall pavement condition of roads within the County as a whole.
- **Pathways:** Design, right of way acquisition, and construction of pedestrian accommodations throughout the County in accordance with the Beaufort County Connects Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2021.
- **Transportation Technologies/Access Roads:** Planning, design, right of way acquisition, and construction of access roads for better inner connectivity. Implementation of transportation technologies to support the enhancement to capacity and safety of the transportation system.
- **Resiliency:** Improvements to transportation infrastructure to address flooding, sea level rise, stormwater and drainage.

Big Projects:

- **SC 170:** Capacity and safety improvements on a 4.5-mile segment of SC 170 from US 278 to SC 462.
- **US 21 and US 21 (Bus.) /SC 281 Corridor Improvements:** Multimodal and access improvements along the entire US 21 corridor from Bell Bridge to Boundary Street and along US 21 (Bus. Corridor) to Woods Memorial Bridge to improve safety, interconnectivity and capacity.
- **SC 46 Improvements:** Capacity and safety improvements along SC 46 from SC 170 to Jasper County. Additional safety improvements (i.e.- turn lanes at intersections) along SC 46 from SC 170 to Buckwalter Parkway. All planned improvements would be coordinated so as to not disrupt the Scenic Byway designation.
- **Hilton Head Island Municipal Projects:** Road resurfacing, intersection improvements, and pathways as requested by the Town of Hilton Head.
- **US 278 Corridor Improvements/Enhancements:** Additional funding to support the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project in the 2018 Transportation Sales Tax Referendum.
- **Lady's Island Corridor Improvements:** Lady's Island Corridor Traffic Improvements
- **Bluffton Regional Roadway Network:** Implementation of any or all Bluffton projects listed as priorities in the approved LATS Transportation Plan. Bluffton Town Council would designate projects to be undertaken by Beaufort County.

EXHIBIT B

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman and Members, Beaufort County Council

From: Dean Moss, Chairman, Transportation Advisory Committee

Copy to: County Administrator and Members, Transportation Advisory Committee

Subject: Transportation Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations

Date: May 10, 2022

1. Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to transmit to the Beaufort County Council the recommendations and observations of the Council appointed Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). These recommendations represent the unanimous position of those 17 members of the Committee who actively participated in the deliberations.

2. Summary General Recommendations

The Committee recommends that Council prepare a referendum question to be placed upon the ballot at the earliest feasible date, which will ask the electorate to approve a one percent (1%) additional sales tax in Beaufort County, beginning in the following year and extending for ten years. The proceeds from this tax would be expended by the County for a series of critical transportation and mobility projects and programs vital to the health and safety of the residents and visitors. Further, the Committee recommends that a standing Transportation Advisory Committee be appointed to assist the County Council and Staff in the prioritization and implementation of the projects and activities to be funded by the referendum.

3. Council's Charge to the Committee

County Council created the TAC through a resolution adopted on February 7, 2022. The charge to the Committee is contained in paragraph #6 and reads as follows:

"The citizen's committee is charged with completing and preparing the following recommendations:

- a. A proposed project list and/or categories for the referendum question(s)*
- b. The amount of the sales tax to be collected; and/or*
- c. The duration of the sales tax collection period."*

4. Committee Process

The Committee consisted of seventeen (17) members, one each from the eleven County Council Districts, one each from the five municipalities and one from the city of Hardeeville. The Hardeeville representative did not attend any meetings and the Yemassee representative attended one. The other appointees were, in general, in attendance at all the meetings. The Committee met ten times, mostly on a Tuesday afternoon from 5:30 to between 7:00 and 7:30. The first four meetings of the TAC were spent learning and digesting the very complex jargon and procedures involved in the planning, engineering, and financing of transportation projects. Staff then prepared a "strawman" of major

EXHIBIT B

highway projects and other categories of more minor projects, that the Committee could work from. The remaining meetings were spent defining, debating, and modifying these suggested projects and the monies allocated to each one. At the meeting on May 2, the Committee reached a general consensus and at the meeting on May 10, formally voted unanimously to approve the projects, amounts and recommendations that are contained in this memo.

5. Role of the Staff

Staff involved in this project consisted of Assistant County Administrator Jared Fralix, Capital Projects Coordinator, Brittanee Fields, and Administrative Assistant Carol Puryear. In the final two meetings, recently hired Engineering Director, Eric Claussen, also attended. Given the complex nature of this process there was a lot for the Committee members to learn and staff provided many documents and plans that had been completed by the State of SC, the Low Country COG, County Planning, and the municipalities. Staff provided the Committee a suggested list of projects, transportation program categories and amounts. There were many questions at every meeting, and they were clearly and patiently answered. In sum, the staff support to the TAC was outstanding.

6. Concepts behind the Recommendations

The Committee is recommending that the referendum contain two types of project expenditures.

a. Specific Projects

These represent the traditional approach to referendum questions. As in the 2018 referendum, specific projects are enumerated with an allocation of money specified. An example might be "Highway 170 Improvements – \$80 million", A short description of the project could be included. As described below, the Committee recommends that eight of these projects be included in the referendum. They are countywide and address problems both on Federally designated highways (278, 46, 170, 21) and on State, County, and local roads, and streets. \$220 million is recommended for projects south of the Broad River and \$115 million is recommended for projects north of the Broad River. It is important to note that none of these projects have been designed or bid, and the amounts assigned to them do not represent project budgets.

b. Transportation Improvement Programs

This category encompasses a large variety of projects which, because they are small (pave a dirt road), or because they may emerge in the future, cannot be specifically defined. These are projects that are, and will be, undeniably required, but which cannot yet be defined and may cost only a fraction of a "Specific Project". They would address needs that will emerge all over the County; in response, for example, to coastal flooding, new developments in rural areas, or the need to resurface exiting streets. Spent correctly, these funds will benefit residents and business all over the County. The Committee recommends putting approximately one half (\$365 million) of the total expected revenue into these categories of projects, as described below.

7. Recommendations

a. Amount and Length of Tax

We recommend that the sales tax be applied at 1% (one penny on the dollar) for a period of ten years. We assumed a moderate to high growth rate. Based upon this projection the tax should raise approximately \$700,000,000 over ten years. We believe that this amount will enable us to plan, develop and implement appropriate solutions to meet the current needs caused by an overwhelmed and aging infrastructure system and to accomplish the improvements required today to address future demands. In addition, this money can be multiplied several times over by aggressive pursuit of matching federal and state funds and the development of coordinated projects with Jasper County.

b. Specific Projects and Amounts

i. Hwy 170 Improvements - \$80,000,000

Capacity and safety improvements on a 4.5-mile segment of SC 170 from US 278 to SC 462.

ii. Hwy 46 Improvements - \$20,000,000

Capacity and safety improvements along SC 46 from SC 170 to Jasper County. Additional safety improvements (i.e.- turn lanes at intersections) along SC 46 from SC 170 to Buckwalter Parkway. All planned improvements would be designed so as to preserve the Scenic Byway designation.

iii. Bluffton Regional Roadway Network - \$40,000,000

Implementation of any or all Bluffton projects listed as priorities in the approved LATS Transportation Plan. Bluffton Town Council would designate projects to be undertaken by Beaufort County.

iv. Hilton Head Island Municipal Projects - \$40,000,000

Road resurfacing, intersection improvements and pathways as requested by the Town of Hilton Head.

v. Hwy 278 Project Enhancements -\$40,000,000

Additional funding to support the US 278 Corridor Improvement Project

vi. US 21 and US 21(Bus.)/SC 281 Corridor Improvements -\$75,000,000

Multimodal and access improvements along the US 21 corridor from Bell Bridge to Boundary Street and along the US 21(Business) corridor to Woods Memorial Bridge to improve safety, interconnectivity, and capacity.

vii. Lady's Island Corridor Improvements -\$40,000,000

Lady's Island Corridor Traffic Improvements

c. Transportation Improvement Programs

i. Mass Transit – \$25,000,000

EXHIBIT B

Funding multimodal transportation planning and implementation, to include marine transport, for a more robust and equitable public transportation system.

- ii. **Safety - \$50,000,000**
Safety improvements along roadways and intersections to include pedestrian accommodations.
- iii. **Resilience - \$20,000,000**
Improvements to transportation infrastructure to address flooding, sea level rise, stormwater, and drainage.
- iv. **Dirt Road Paving - \$50,000,000**
Paving of county-owned dirt roads throughout the County.
- v. **Resurfacing – \$60,000,000**
Road resurfacing and preservation of ALL roadways (State, County, and municipal owned) throughout the County. The goal is to improve the overall pavement condition of roads across the County.
- vi. **Pathways - \$50,000,000**
Design, right of way acquisition, and construction of pedestrian accommodations throughout the County in accordance with the Beaufort County Connects Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2021. We recommend that priority be given to pathways already approved by the voters in the 2018 referendum
- vii. **Transportation Technology/Access Roads - \$50,000,000**
Planning, design, right of way acquisition, and construction of access roads for better interconnectivity. Implementation of transportation technologies to support enhancements to capacity and safety of the transportation system.
- viii. **Greenbelts (Long term Demand Reduction) - \$60,000,000**
Acquisition of property to reduce new lots and thereby establish a balance between environmental protection and rapid development growth. *Note: the term “Greenbelt” is used in the enabling legislation as an eligible category of expenditure.*

8. Implementation Recommendations

a. Advisory Committee

- i. County Council, with other stakeholders, should create an “Advisory” committee to provide recommendations to Council to prioritize projects for the entire length of the program. It should meet bi-monthly or quarterly. Its membership should mirror the TAC.
- ii. The Committee should make a call each year for projects from all stakeholders (County, municipalities, LATS/COG) for general projects.

EXHIBIT B

iii. County staff in coordination with the Advisory Committee should create a priority index for all central programs such as:

1. **Safety:** intersection Improvements, turn lanes, rural road improvements. Specifics to be developed.
2. **Dirt Road Paving:** update existing 5-year plan to include municipal dirt roads.
3. **Resilience:** priorities should be based on susceptibility to flooding and population or critical functions served by the road.
4. **Resurfacing:** program to look at improving any and all roads (DOT, County, Municipal) specifics to be developed.
5. **Pathways:** use approved county wide pedestrian and bike master plan as a guide. Priorities to projects already approved by voters.
6. **Transportation Technologies/Access Roads:** focus on access and connecting roads, smart signals, electric vehicles services.

b. **Issue Revenue Bonds**

Big projects should be bonded for immediate work

c. **Greenbelt (Long Term Demand Reduction)**

Utilize Rural and Critical Lands Board for priority setting of expenditures related to land or development rights acquisition

d. **Mass Transit**

Because no central plan currently exists for a comprehensive mass transit program, this should be the first priority. Utilize the exiting transit authority as the lead agency for this effort supported by an advisory committee.

9. Conclusions

As we weaved through the process and reviewed the gravity of the assignment and the critical needs for improvement and new components for our local mobility, it became quite evident that there is much to do. It appears that we are not just behind the “8 ball”, we are under it; and it will take a coordinated public relations effort to move even this limited referendum forward for a better “mobility future for all of us.

On behalf of the Transportation Advisory Committee members, may I say that it has been an honor to be entrusted by Council with preparing these important recommendations. I am available to meet with Council at your discretion to explain and discuss these projects and recommendations.