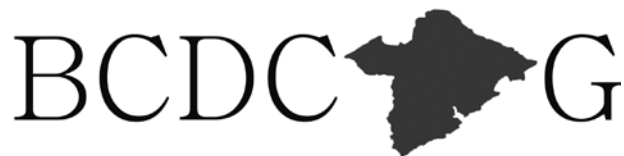


# Public Involvement Plan

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Updated

# i-26*ALT*



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# Public Involvement Plan

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## 1.0 Project Overview

The Alternatives Analysis (AA) is a process for analyzing and comparing all reasonable transportation alternatives along a corridor to address defined mobility problems and achieve specific goals. The AA transportation planning process informs the public and local decision makers with an assessment of a wide range of public transportation or multimodal alternatives to address transportation problems within a corridor; provides information for project justification and local financial commitment; supports the selection of a locally preferred alternative; and enables regional leaders to adopt the locally preferred alternative as part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The Alternatives Analysis is part of the FTA's Section 5309 Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants (New Starts) process that project sponsors must undergo to be eligible for capital funding to build new and expanded rail, bus rapid transit, and ferry systems.

Initiated by the Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) called the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS), the I-26 Alternatives Analysis will identify and evaluate transit solutions for the I-26 Corridor. The purpose of the I-26 Alternatives Analysis is to improve transit service and enhance regional mobility along the I-26 Corridor between Summerville and Charleston to manage existing and future transportation demand, support the regional economy, and create livable communities. This Public Involvement Plan defines strategies for communicating with agencies, stakeholders, and the public about the I-26 Regional Fixed Guideway Transit Alternatives Analysis (i-26ALT) project. The outreach conducted will focus on engaged participation by a variety of stakeholders and the public with the goal of selecting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for transit improvements along the study corridor. It also supports the ongoing advocacy and outreach activities set forth by CHATS and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) to promote coordinated regional transportation planning.

The i-26ALT Public Involvement Plan (PIP) aims to **identify** the various audiences vested and affected; **educate** them on the purpose and need for the project through public meetings, online marketing, print media, etc.; and **engage** them in the decision-making process.

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## 2.0 Goals & Objectives

The following goals and objectives provide guidelines for the implementation of the I-26 Alternatives Analysis PIP. The process is designed to provide opportunities for interested parties to receive information, discuss issues, and partake in the decision-making process during the study, particularly at its key milestones. The following goals and objectives are consistent with the existing policies the CHATS Public Involvement Plan and with strategies recommended by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

### **GOAL 1: Create opportunities for early and continuing community and agency buy-in and participation in the decision-making process.**

#### **Objectives:**

1. Develop and implement a formal process for enabling the public and agencies to actively participate in the decision-making process, including the development of alternatives, identification of evaluation criteria, and selection of feasible transit alternatives for the I-26 study corridor.
  - Create a project Steering Committee consisting of representatives from local, county, state, and federal governmental agencies, area transit providers, as well as area chambers of commerce to ensure that all communities within the study area are able to actively participate in all aspects of the study process.
  - Create a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of staff from each of the affected agencies (Steering Committee agencies).
  - Identify and contact Key Stakeholders via a face-to-face meeting or written email/letter to obtain input on local issues and concerns regarding transportation problems and potential improvement strategies along the study corridor.
  - Hold all public meetings at various locations within the corridor study area at key project milestones in order to share analysis and receive comments. Distribute, collect and transcribe comment cards during all meetings, for inclusion in reports to the region's decision-makers.

**GOAL 2: Inform, educate, and engage the public and regional agencies throughout the project.**

**Objectives:**

1. Provide open access to information on the objectives of the I-26 Alternatives Analysis process and explain the public's role in defining transit improvement alternatives along the study corridor and in assisting in the selection of the most feasible LPA.
  - Communicate with the public and agencies via a wide range of outreach tools tailored to diverse target audiences (steering and technical advisory committee meetings, project website, project newsletter, public notices, flyers/posters, all varieties of media, etc.)
  - Assure inclusion of traditionally under-represented groups in the planning process.
    - a. Seek out the participation of low-income, minority, youth, and elderly populations, as well as persons with disabilities. Monitor participation of these groups and adjust involvement methods as necessary to ensure their representation and participation.
    - b. Present information in a manner that overcomes potential language, economic, or cultural barriers, and is meaningful to different cultural groups (Spanish language translations, etc.).

**GOAL 3: Maintain accountability, credibility, and responsibility of the i-26ALT Steering and Technical Advisory Committee and sponsoring agencies throughout the study.**

**Objectives:**

1. Clearly communicate the roles of the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees in recommending the final study conclusions for the I-26 Alternatives Analysis to the MPO (CHATS) and the BCDCOG based on the results of the planning process.
2. Maintain accurate documentation and attendance records of all project meetings so that interested parties can be informed of discussions, results and decisions (shared on project website), and so that the responsibilities can be assigned to key project participants (accountability).
3. Identify potential conflicts of interest or other related issues among the active study participants.

4. Cooperate with local and regional transportation agencies conducting concurrent or adopted transportation/transit studies in order to avoid public confusion and the duplication of effort between related projects in the study area.
  - Our Region, Our Plan
  - Charleston Partnership for Prosperity Neck Area Master Plan
  - I-526 Mark Clark Extension Study
  - CARTA: East Cooper & Charleston Peninsula Route Studies
  - Sheep Island Road Interchange
  - Port Access Road
  - SCDOT Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan
  - TriCounty Link Route Assessment

**GOAL 4: Achieve regional consensus among competing public interests.**

**Objectives:**

1. Present study findings in a comprehensive, objective, and reader-friendly manner, focusing on how the results of the I-26 Alternatives Analysis will meet the transit alternative needs in the study area.
2. Facilitate a formalized process to include public and agency feedback into the technical analyses performed during the study and be able to demonstrate to the public that their issues and concerns have been reasonably considered, even if not adopted.

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**3.0 Public Involvement Action Items**

The following outlines the action items for the Public Involvement Plan: Identify & Organize, Educate, and Engage.

**3.1 Identify & Organize**

Identified stakeholders include interested citizens, organizations, elected officials, employers and property owners within the study area. The project team will maintain a contact list database which includes the names and email addresses of all project stakeholders and interested public citizens. The project team will solicit the names and contact information of

interested parties via the project website, sign-up sheets at public meetings, and referrals from existing agency contacts. This database will be used throughout the study for mailings, invitations, and public notices.

The following lists of regional leaders were invited to serve on one of two critical project committees: Steering and Technical Advisory.

**Project Steering Committee**

The individuals listed below represent the interests of the publics they serve within the i-26ALT study corridor. The project team will report to the Steering Committee at key project milestones and as needed.

The i-26ALT Steering Committee (SC) is responsible for:

- Providing direction and guidance throughout the study process;
- Resolving obstacles and barriers that may arise during the study process;
- Acting as project champions and advocates to constituents;
- Sharing feedback; and
- Developing policy and recommendations for the Locally Preferred Alternative.

**Table 1: i-26ALT Steering Committee**

Agency	Representative
Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS)	Mr. Elliott Summey, Chairman
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Ms. Yolanda Morris
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Ms. Jessica Heckter
South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)	Mr. Doug Frate, Director of Intermodal Planning
Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (ARTA)	Mr. Jeff Burns, Interim Executive Director
Tri-County Link	Mr. Eric Shuler, Operations Manager
Berkeley County	Mr. Dan Davis, County Supervisor
Charleston County	Mr. Teddie E. Pryor, Sr., Chairman of the Board Mr. Jim Armstrong, Chairman of the Transportation Committee
Dorchester County	Mr. Larry Hargett, Councilman Mr. Jason Ward, County Administrator
City of Charleston	Mr. Hernan E. Pena, Jr., Traffic & Transportation Director
City of North Charleston	Mr. Raymond H. Anderson, Jr., Assistant to the Mayor
Town of Summerville	Mayor William C. Collins
City of Hanahan	Mr. John P. Cribb, City Administrator
Town of Lincolnton	Mayor Charles Duberry
City of Goose Creek	Mayor Michael J. Heitzler
Charleston Metro Chamber	Ms. Mary Graham, Senior Vice President
Tri-County Regional Chamber (TCRCC)	Ms. Teresa M. Hatchell, Executive Director
Greater Summerville/Dorchester Chamber	Ms. Rita Berry, President/CEO
Berkeley Chamber	Ms. Elaine Morgan, CEO
South Carolina Legislative Delegation	Representative William Crosby
Joint Base Charleston	Mr. William Werrell, Community Planner



**Technical Advisory Committee**

The i-26ALT Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is responsible for providing:

- Technical guidance;
- Review and comments on evaluation criteria, conceptual alternatives, and screening processes;
- Project updates to their respective organizations;
- Assistance in creating the stakeholder database; and
- Feedback to the consultant team on the accuracy and clarity of public presentations and informational marketing materials.

**Table 2: i-26ALT Technical Advisory Committee**

Agency	Representative
City of Charleston	Mr. Tim Keane
City of Goose Creek	Mr. Dennis C. Harmon
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Ms. Jessica Heckter
Federal Transit Administration (FTA)	Ms. Holly Peterson
South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)	Ms. Diane Lackey
South Carolina State Ports Authority (SCSPA)	Mr. Patrick Moore
Dorchester County	Mr. Alec Brebner
Town of Mt. Pleasant	Mr. Brad Morrison
Charleston County	Mr. Dan Pennick
Town of Summerville	Ms. Madelyn Robinson
Coastal Conservation League	Myles Maland
Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)	Ms. Ginger Stevens
Joint Base Charleston	Mr. Al Urrutia
City of North Charleston	Ms. Eyda Arroyave
CSX	Mr. Christopher Philips
City of Hanahan	Mr. Johnny Cribb
Charleston County Aviation Authority (CCAA)	Mr. Al Britnell
Tri-County Link	Mr. Eric Shuler
Berkeley County	Mr. Eric Greenway
Norfolk Southern	

**Key Stakeholders (Private & Public)**

The following industries and agencies will be kept current with the progress and findings of the i-26ALT study by directing them to the project website where documents and contact information may be accessed. Face-to-face meetings will be conducted as deemed necessary by the project team.

**Private:**

Boeing  
Bosch  
MeadWestvaco  
Cummings  
Verizon  
Force Protection  
Tanger Outlets  
Palmetto Commerce Park  
Charleston Southern University  
The Art Institute of Charleston  
Virginia College  
Roper St. Francis Healthcare  
Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center  
Trident Health System

**Public:**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4  
US Department of Navy  
South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office  
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
South Carolina Department of Commerce  
South Carolina Department of Social Services  
South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism  
South Carolina Trucking Association  
South Carolina State Ports Authority  
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs  
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

South Carolina Emergency Management Division  
South Carolina Department of Public Safety  
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)  
BCD Rural Transportation Management Association (Tri-County Link)  
Charleston County Human Service Commission  
Charleston County Aviation Authority  
Coastal Conservation League  
Charleston Moves  
Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Berkeley County Economic Development  
Charleston County Economic Development  
Dorchester County Department of Economic Development  
Charleston Regional Development Alliance  
Historic Charleston Foundation  
Preservation Society Trident Area Council on Aging  
SC Community Loan Fund  
Donnelly Foundation  
College of Charleston  
Trident Technical College  
Medical University of South Carolina

### 3.2 Educate

Public and private agency involvement is critical during project milestones. The following methods will be used to educate and obtain input from a variety of citizens, organizations, and agencies. Minutes and/or presentation materials for all meetings will be captured and made available to the public.

1. **Stakeholder Outreach Meetings** – Throughout the study process, targeted meetings with identified key stakeholders will be conducted in an effort to garner a balanced view of opinions, interests, and concerns regarding the study area. Discussions will be documented in meeting minutes and incorporated into the technical analysis for consideration.
2. **Project Steering Committee Meetings** – The project team will provide periodic project updates. One workshop may be held to provide an in-depth explanation of the plan's technical process and recommendations.

3. **Technical Advisory Committee Meetings** – The project team will meet with the TAC as necessary throughout the study process.
4. **Public Involvement Meetings** – Public meetings will be held at various locations within the corridor study area. These meetings will take place at key project milestones to share analysis and receive comments. All meetings will have Spanish-speaking team members available as well as presentation materials translated in Spanish. Comment cards will be distributed during all meetings, collected, and transcribed for inclusion in decision-making.

### 3.3 Engage

The following marketing tactics will be used to involve the public in the i-26ALT study process.

1. **Public Notices** – The public will be notified of project workshops at least 15 days prior to the event. The project team will send notices to the major regional newspapers and popular minority radio stations (media contact list is available upon request).
2. **Newsletters** – The project team will prepare and publish a project newsletter quarterly which will be posted on the project website.
3. **Media Relations** – The project team will issue media releases to local newspapers and television and radio stations throughout the process. The Project Kick-off Public Meeting will serve as a press conference to build awareness for the study and promote the project website.
4. **Flyers/Posters** – The project team will distribute, as deemed appropriate to increase participation and expand reach, flyers/posters to public libraries, senior living centers, community centers, religious institutions, and other popular meeting locations within the study area.
5. **Website & Social Media** – The project team will establish and maintain a project website to include:
  - Brief description of the i-26ALT project with maps, photos, and renderings
  - Meeting Calendar – including agendas and minutes
  - Project newsletters
  - Project surveys
  - Social Media – Facebook and LinkedIn

6. **Cross-promotions** – The project team will work with allied organizations to promote the project website and public meetings via their websites, e-newsletters, etc.
7. **Comment Cards** – The project team will distribute and collect comment cards during all public workshops and transcribe the feedback for inclusion in decision-making.
8. **Speakers Bureau** – The project team will present information regarding the i-26ALT study as requested by regional organizations.
9. **Focus Groups** – The project team will conduct focus groups as deemed necessary throughout the study process. Potential focus groups could include industry sectors (i.e. hospitality and tourism); demographic groups (i.e. senior populations); neighborhood improvement groups, or special interest groups.
10. **Email Blasts** – The project team will send emails to the project's mailing list comprising of Steering Committee members, Technical Advisory Committee members, subscribers to the project website, and other contacts derived from mailing lists and other relevant sources announcing public meetings and findings as they come to the forefront.

Appendix I shows the project team's phased approach to achieving the public education and engagement goals identified in the Public Involvement Plan.

## Appendix I: Phased Approach to Public Involvement

The public outreach process will be employed throughout the study process using a variety of techniques and approaches to reach a broad range of stakeholders. Three phases of outreach are proposed to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Public Involvement Plan. The phases include:

- 1) Establishing a vision for transit in 2035 along the I-26 Corridor: What does urban transit in the region look like today and what could it look like in 2035?
- 2) Turning the vision into a plan for transit along the I-26 Corridor: How should transit travel along the corridor (modes) and where should it stop (nodes)?
- 3) Steps toward implementing transit along the I-26 Corridor

### **Phase 1: Establishing a Vision for Transit along the I-26 Corridor**

The first phase of the public outreach process is intended to provide information about the study to the public, as well as to give the public the opportunity to provide input toward a macro-level, system-wide vision which looks at “big picture” items such as the current transit system and corridors served; gaps that need to be filled; future conditions that might need to be addressed; and what general modes stakeholders see existing and interacting along the I-26 Corridor by 2035.

- 1) Stakeholder Lists: The project team will utilize existing stakeholder lists to reach out to community leaders and groups to inform them of the study and upcoming opportunities for input. The project newsletter will include public involvement dates. Meetings and interviews will be scheduled as appropriate to supplement the interviews that were held in February/March 2013. Additionally, the project team will make itself available for presentations to local organizations as requested.
- 2) Transit Rider Outreach: The project team will conduct a series of street sessions at major CARTA transfer locations, express bus stops, or other public locations where transit riders congregate. Sessions will include a regional map with existing transit routes and survey forms to provide the opportunity for the public to provide input to team members or via comment card. Location, dates and times of sessions will be announced in advance. Proposed locations include:
  - a. Mary Street Garage Transfer Location
  - b. John Street Transfer Location
  - c. Spring Street (BI-LO DT Charleston) Transfer Location

- d. North Charleston SuperStop
  - e. North Charleston K-Mart Park and Ride
  - f. Dorchester Rd. Park and Ride
- 3) Public Meetings: Three public meetings will be held, one each in Summerville, North Charleston, and Charleston. The two-hour meeting format will be set up as follows:
- :00-:15 Open House
  - :15-:30 Presentation
  - :30-:00 Vision Session Rules/Break-Out
  - :00-:30 Visioning Session
  - :30-:00 Visioning Results

The purpose of these meetings will be to help establish a systemwide vision for transit along the I-26 Corridor. The room will be set up with tables of 8-10 people. Each table will have a designated facilitator and scribe represented by a member of the project team and a regional map. Each table will be asked to mark up suggested modifications to the existing transit network as well as to provide input toward a macro-level vision and goals of what the urban transit network should look like by 2035. The focus of these meetings will be on the urban transit network's service area and high capacity, fixed guideway alignments along the I-26 Corridor. The project team members will facilitate the process, and at the end of the session, each table will present its vision to the entire group.

The result of the first phase of outreach will be to establish the community priorities and vision for transit along the I-26 Corridor to guide the next phase, which will further refine this vision to identify potential station areas and transit modes serving these areas.

### **Phase 2: Turning the Vision into a Plan for Transit**

The second phase of public outreach will involve micro-level visioning along the I-26 Corridor alignments to develop a plan for potential transit station locations (nodes) based on the fixed guideway alignments and potential transit modes (Commuter Rail, Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, etc.) that can serve the alignment. This phase will look at how the "lay-of-the-land" might be influenced. It would take a closer look at where stations might be located, and what land use might look like along corridors or around station locations.

A series of surveys and public meetings will help to develop the transit plan.

- 1) Transit Rider Outreach: An onboard survey of riders on CARTA routes that collects origin and destination, as well as demographic information, will provide another opportunity for transit riders to provide input, and the project team to understand how existing transit riders are currently using the system.
- 2) Stakeholder Outreach
  - a. Employee Survey: A web-based employee survey will be sent to major employers throughout the region to support outreach to the commuter market that is not currently using or being served by transit. The project team will coordinate with local agencies (i.e. SC Works) and local Chambers of Commerce to identify these employers.
  - b. Focused Outreach: Local colleges and universities make up a significant population of the current transit ridership as well as workforce along the I-26 Corridor; thus, a targeted outreach campaign on the campuses will be focused on this unique market to include:
    - i. College of Charleston
    - ii. Trident Technical College
    - iii. Medical University of South Carolina
    - iv. Charleston Southern University
- 3) Public Meetings
  - a. High Capacity Transit/Station Area Planning Land Use Workshops: As described in the revised scope of work, a series of workshops will be held in spring 2015 that will focus on fixed guideway transit modes (i.e. commuter rail, LRT, BRT) and the opportunities for transit stations and/or transit oriented development (TOD) based on:
    - i. Existing/Future Activity Centers
    - ii. Opportunities for Infill Development
    - iii. Affordable Housing
    - iv. Major Residential and Employment areas
    - v. Existing/Future Park & Rides and/or Transit Stations

These sessions are intended to understand the land uses along the fixed guideway alignments identified in the visioning sessions within the corridor to further refine where stations and TOD could be located. These sessions could



include a presentation, preference surveys, and/or interactive planning sessions to identify TOD/station areas. It is proposed that up to five sessions as needed will be held with a focus on the following subareas:

- i. Summerville/Lincolntonville – West of I-26
  - ii. Summerville/Goose Creek – East of I-26
  - iii. North Charleston/Hanahan
  - iv. Northern Peninsula/Neck Area
  - v. Downtown Charleston
- b. Public Input Meeting: Three public meetings will be held in summer 2015 as the screening process progresses. These sessions will provide the public an opportunity to review the results of the analysis and the alternatives that have come to the forefront in the process, as well as to comment on the recommended short, mid, and long range urban transit network. The goal of these sessions will be to gain public input and buy-in for a Locally Preferred Alternative. Three meetings will be held, one each in the cities of Summerville, North Charleston, and Charleston.

### **Phase 3: Moving Forward with Transit along the I-26 Corridor**

The final outreach effort will be to present the Locally Preferred Alternative as selected and refined following the summer meetings, as well as to present the short, mid, and long range transit plans. This meeting will share costs as well as next steps to move forward in the process. These meetings will also provide the opportunity for public input toward funding and other policies necessary to implement the plan.