



**COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia Economic Development Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Peter M. Brown, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Peter M. Brown	Chair	Present	
Will Brennan	Member	Present	
Aditi Bussells	Member	Present	

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Update from the Central Midlands Council of Governments Economic Development and Workforce Development Directors - Mr. Britt Poole, Executive Director / Central Midlands Council of Governments

Mr. Britt Poole, Executive Director / Central Midlands Council of Governments said I started at the COG on July 1, 2023. We represent Richland, Lexington, Newberry and Fairfield Counties. I asked staff to talk about the things that directly impact the city of Columbia's economic development. We also do a lot with planning, aging, the ombudsman program, economic development, GIS, and the community development block grant in smaller areas. My goal is to create a regional body where we work through regional issues.

Mr. Gregory Sprouse, Director of Research, Planning, and Development / Central Midlands Council of Governments said I manage our local government planning, community and economic development departments. We serve as the US Economic Development Administration designated economic development district for the central midlands region. We are responsible for developing and updating a five year comprehensive economic development strategy in coordination with all local governments. Our priorities include support for small, women and minority business enterprises; promoting outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities and helping to manage the Midlands Business Leadership Group's regional gateway projects. We are working with the South Carolina Department of Commerce on a regional tech hub designation for a large part of the state. We are working with the city of Columbia to secure funding for the development of a regional climate action plan. Let us know if there is a role the COG can play in supporting conversations and long-term planning around Scout Motors.



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Ms. Tammy Beagen, Director of Workforce Development / Central Midlands Council of Governments said we operate the US Department of Labor projects that come to the state for employment and training. We cover Richland, Lexington, and Fairfield Counties. September is Workforce Development Month and we will have a job fair on September 20, 2023 at Dutch Square Mall. An apprenticeship fair will be held in October. We are interested in working with the city on the youth work experience program and the on-the-job training program. We will help raise awareness of the city's public utilities pipeline. The training is there and we hope to gain traction in the fall. We provide new industry assistance and funds for incumbent worker training.

Mr. Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director, Director of Transportation, and Acting Director for the Area Agency on Aging / Central Midlands Council of Governments said I manage the Columbia Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization. Our goal is to conduct a needs assessment within the transportation system. The long reach transportation plan has a 20 year horizon and it is updated every five years. We worked with the city on the Walk Bike Plan, the Bike Share Feasibility Study, streetscape improvements on South Main, and improvements on Assembly Street. We are adding the Assembly Street railroad separation project to our transportation improvement plan and this will allow the city to raise more funds.

There was consensus of the committee to follow-up on any matching federal grant programs for the employment of youth; request additional information on workforce development and statistics on the COG's apprenticeship and job placement programs; and to contact Richland County to see how we can partner with them to be a workforce development clearinghouse.

Councilor Brennan said this East Columbia project came out of a conversation I had with Reginald about the growth of Garners Ferry Road around Veteran's Administration and Leesburg Road. It is important for local governments to have a wish list, review it with the COG and discuss how to implement it. This is an example of how to leverage your participation with the COG.

2. Columbia East Traffic and Land Use Study - Mr. Joe Robertson, P.E., PTOE, RSP2I / Kimley Horn

Mr. Joe Robertson, P.E., PTOE, RSP2I, Transportation Engineer / Kimley Horn said the purpose of the Columbia East Traffic and Land Use Study was to look at the southeast portion of Columbia and to determine the current traffic issues, the anticipated growth, the issues we expect to see in the future, and what we can do to get ahead. The Central Midlands Council of



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Governments is the owner of the project and I am the project manager with Kimley Horn. The study area is about 11,000 acres generally bounded by the railroad on the south, Trotter Road on the east, Rosewood and Fort Jackson Boulevard on the north and Fort Jackson on the northeast. The area includes two city council districts and three county council districts. In Phase I, we looked at existing conditions and known future development. Leesburg Road has over 25,000 vehicles per day. We hope to identify cost effective transportation solutions to solve existing and anticipated issues. Objectives include working with developers to encourage mixed-use developments; working with city staff on policies that support this objective; and identifying grant funding for projects. Challenges range from a high frequency of crashes on Garners Ferry Road, housing availability and affordability, and military activity. The study area is primarily residential. The frontage of Garners Ferry Road is mostly commercial and institutional. About 2,500 new single-family homes and 1,000 multifamily units are coming online. We estimate another 18,000 daily trips. The traffic will continue to increase as development occurs in southeast Columbia. It is expected that commercial development will follow. There are opportunities to improve safety, mode integration, access management, and beautification. Next steps include a public meeting on Tuesday, August 29, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the Richland Library Southeast Branch; technical working group meetings and advisory group meetings; meetings with SCDOT and utility groups; development of the purpose, need statements, alternatives and recommendations; and a presentation of the final study and recommendations to City Council.

3. Main Street District Update - Mr. Matt Kennell, President & CEO

Mr. Matt Kennell, President & CEO/ Main Street District said we are in our 22nd year of this partnership and a lot is going on. The Standard, The Lady, The Palms and The Klondike opened this year and together brought in almost 2,000 residents to the area. We are also seeing new retail. Cooper Canyon opened this year. The Spotted Salamander opened a second location on Main Street. The Oliver Gospel Mission opened the Hope Shop on Taylor Street. Several restaurants also opened this year. City Council gave us additional funds that enabled our Yellow Shirt Ambassadors to cross Elmwood Avenue. We now cover Elmwood Avenue from Bull Street to Lincoln Street and the area is noticeably cleaner. Other accomplishments include an increased social media presence, increased ambassadors, and an outreach ambassador. We look forward to expanding the ceiling of lights, working with community partners to increase density in the district, and making downtown safer and more appealing. We are seeing a record number of new hotels. We are challenged by remote working and we have to do more to make people want to come downtown. From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, we removed almost 152,000 pounds of trash; made over 6,200 business contacts and 2,500 homeless contacts; and provided hospitality assistance over 12,000 times.



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Councilor Brennan suggested that there be an expansion of the Clean and Safe model to South Main Street.

Councilor Bussells said we should be thinking about how we will connect Finlay Park to Main Street and get folks to use that space.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Bussells, the committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 2:08 p.m. for the discussion of item 4.

4. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to §30-4-70(a)(5)

2221 Devine Street

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk