



Columbia Health Social and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, April 28, 2026

Call to Order

The Columbia Health Social and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Sam P. Johnson, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey was present. The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr. was absent.

Approval of Minutes

1. March 24, 2026 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made by Mr. Bailey and seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the March 24, 2026 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

Presentations

2. Prisma Health Community Initiatives – Ms. Lisa McFarlane, Vice President / Prisma Health

Mr. Anthony Jackson, Senior Vice President of Service Lines and Chief Community Officer / Prisma Health acknowledged the significant opportunities within Columbia to create positive change. He stated that Prisma Health recognizes meaningful improvement requires collaboration and emphasized the importance of providing patients with multiple options for accessing care.

Ms. Lisa McFarlane, Vice President of Business Development / OnMed presented an overview of the OnMed Care Station, an ADA-accessible “clinic in a box” that connects patients to live clinicians through a walk-in telehealth model. Patients can be diagnosed and treated for nearly 90% of lower-acuity conditions on site. This helps to reduce costly emergency room visits, particularly among unhoused populations. She noted that the stations support up to 240 languages, require only a standard three-prong outlet, are satellite enabled for underserved areas, and operate under a subscription-based model with no cost to patients. Each station is assigned a care manager to assist with coordination and continuity of care.

Ms. Stacy McPhail, System Director / Prisma Health outlined uninsured and out-of-pocket emergency department costs across the Midlands, noting that approximately \$104 million is spent on emergency department visits regionally. She also emphasized the importance of wraparound services for the care stations, including social worker and community health worker support.

Mr. Anthony Jackson, Senior Vice President of Service Lines and Chief Community Officer / Prisma Health said that the OnMed stations are not solely intended to serve the unhoused population, but also provide broader community health benefits. He noted that emergency rooms in Columbia experience significant wait times and high costs, while many of the conditions treated in emergency rooms could be addressed through the care stations. He stated that emergency room visits are among the most expensive forms of healthcare engagement and highlighted the potential for hospitals to utilize the stations to help manage lower-acuity patients. He also emphasized that accessible healthcare supports workforce availability by helping individuals manage chronic conditions such as diabetes and other illnesses.

There was discussion about OnMed's current use in the Midlands; use for pediatrics; the pay structure; and subscription costs.

3. Riparian Buffer Zones Follow-up – Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., Engineering Director

Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., Engineering Director provided a follow-up to the previous month's presentation regarding a proposed 100-foot increase to the riparian buffer. She stated that staff researched the buffer policies for neighboring municipalities and identified 66 affected parcels involving 29 property owners along the Lower Saluda, Broad, and Congaree Rivers within the City limits. She noted that properties already containing a 100-foot buffer within the floodway were removed from consideration. She also shared that the Stormwater team has been exploring an alternative approach through a special protection area utility fee credit program. Under the proposal, properties providing an additional 50-foot buffer beyond the existing 50-foot ordinance requirement could receive a 15% utility fee reduction, while properties providing an additional 150-foot buffer could receive a 45% reduction. The program would apply to applicable parcels throughout the City of Columbia and would provide fee credits and help protect local river corridors.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water added that the proposed approach would have a broader impact beyond the rivers by extending protections to streams as well. He noted that it would provide commercial and industrial property owners the opportunity to receive significant utility fee reductions and stated that the City of Columbia could move forward with issuing credits immediately.

Mr. Bill Stangler, Congaree Riverkeeper supported the proposed buffer requirements, noting that Lexington and Richland counties already mandate 50-foot buffers. He endorsed using the incentives and the proposed 100-foot buffers along the three main stem rivers to encourage stronger protections citywide. He emphasized that relatively few properties would be affected and said the combined approach would demonstrate a commitment to protecting water quality and habitat.

There was discussion about incentives in neighboring municipalities.

4. Richland County Transportation Penny Program Review – Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., Engineering Director and Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director

Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., Engineering Director shared that staff has met monthly with Richland County since the introduction of the 2012 Transportation Penny Program to review project updates and the status of projects still in queue. She noted that voters approved the 2024 referendum, prompting discussions regarding the new Transportation Penny Program. She stated that Richland County does not plan to issue bonds and will instead utilize revenues as they are collected, with the first distribution estimated at approximately

\$21 million. She added that a portion of the funding will be allocated to The COMET and expressed optimism that paving projects could begin moving forward during the next fiscal year.

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water explained that the City of Columbia develops and prioritizes project lists annually as part of the Transportation Penny Program process. He noted that this would be the first allocation of funding from the new referendum and that projects have been categorized with the understanding that first-year revenues will be limited. He stated that the process also helps establish a consistent rhythm for submitting future projects.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director discussed the opportunity to establish a recurring paving program for the City of Columbia through the new Transportation Penny funding. He explained that the City of Columbia previously conducted a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) study, which rated city-owned streets on a scale from 0 to 100 and was used to develop rebuild and paving lists. He shared the average PCI ratings by district: District 1 at 64%; District 2 at 57%; District 3 at 61%; and District 4 at 65%. He noted that Richland County requested a funding level of \$10 million annually and stated that the City of Columbia is developing a scalable and equitable paving program that could adjust if funding levels are reduced. Street selections were based on the percentage of city-owned streets within each district, while also considering intersecting streets, upcoming water and sewer projects, and planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements to ensure coordinated infrastructure planning.

There was discussion about providing aid to neighborhoods at nearby state road intersections.

Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., Engineering Director reviewed proposed sidewalk, bikeway, greenway, and special infrastructure projects tied to the 2024 Richland County Transportation Penny Program, including the Vista Greenway, Waterfront Park Trail, Assembly Streetscape phases, railroad quiet zone improvements, and the Assembly Rail Separation Project. She noted ongoing coordination with SCDOT and Norfolk Southern, discussed funding needs and project timelines, and stated that several projects are under construction, in design, or moving toward construction, while additional opportunities will continue to be evaluated as funding becomes available.

There was discussion about riverfront district connections, the state buy-back program, and SCDOT's modernization and request for funds from the Transportation Penny Program.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, MMC, CPM
City Clerk