

3rd TRANSPORTATION SALES TAX PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSES

CHARLESTON COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS APRIL 18, 2024



PUBLIC MEETINGS

January 22nd, St. John's High School, Johns Island \approx 100 attendees January 29th, West Ashley High School \approx 50 attendees February 5th, James Island Charter High School ≈ 70 attendees February 12th, Moultrie Middle School, Mount Pleasant \approx 50 attendees February 26th, North Charleston City Hall \approx 40 attendees



ONLINE COMMENT FORM

3rd Transportation Sales Tax

Comment Form

Charleston County Council is considering placing a sales tax and use referendum question on the November 5, 2024, ballot to finance the costs of highways, roads, streets, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, mass transit systems, the preservation of green spaces, as well as the extension of the Mark Clark Expressway. County staff has worked with local municipalities, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments to discuss potential projects and a method of financing these projects. Charleston County staff will hold live public meetings to provide residents the opportunity to comment on the projects identified by the various jurisdictions that could be financed by the proposed sales and use tax. Your comments are important to Charleston County. Please take a moment to complete this form. The information below details the projects under consideration, the approximate cost of each, and the general location of the proposed project. A combination of public input, available funding, and/or design and construction feasibility will be considered when finalizing potential projects. Only a portion of the projects presented will be funded. Your comments will be accepted through March 6, 2024.

A combination of public input, available funding, and/or design and construction feasibility will be considered when finalizing viable projects. Only a portion of the projects presented will be lunded.

Name:*	City:*
Address:*	State:*

Example, 1111 Streetname Apt. No

South Carolina

Zip Code:*

Mark Clark Expressway Extension* - \$1,827,324,000, West Ashley, Johns Island, James Island (https://www.scdotmarkclark.com/)

This is a Priority project. This project will extend the Mark Clark Expressway from its junction with US-17 in West Ashley, onto Johns and James Island where it will join the James Island Connector at Folly Road

Rivers Avenue Mobility Improvements - \$142,000,000, North Charleston

Construct a series of missing sidewalks/multi-use paths within one-half mile of the LCRT stations along the Rivers Ave Corridor (US-58/US-72) between Medical Plaza Drive and Hackemann Avenue to facilitate bike/pedestrian access.



Mark Clark Ext. (Phase 1 & 2) \$1,827,324,000 - 34%

3rd TST Potential Distributions	
Mark Clark Ext. (Phase 1 & 2)	
New "Potential Projects"	
Debt Service/Interest	
Annual Allocation Program	
CARTA/BRT Operations	\$
Greenbelt Program	
2nd TST Carryover Needs	
TOTAL=	\$

<u>Cost</u> \$ 1,827,324,000 811,839,000 \$ 748,614,000 650,000,000 648,000,000 432,000,000 282,223,000 \$ \$ 5,400,000,000



COUNTY-WIDE PUBLIC RESPONSE



COUNTY-WIDE PUBLIC RESPONSE



CATEGORIZING COMMENTS

Received 1,018 individual responses with over 7,300 comments

Staff reviewed comments received and distributed into 3 basic categories:

- Support project
- **Oppose project**
- Inconclusive

Inconclusive comments were not included in determining the number of Total Comments or Support Rate.



3rd TRANSPORTATION SALES TAX PROJECT MAP



MARK CLARK EXTENSION

Estimated Cost = \$1,827,000,000

Project will extend the Mark Clark Expressway from its junction with US-17 in West Ashley, onto Johns and James Island where it will join the James Island Connector at Folly Road.

- Total Comments Received = 779
- Support Rate = 56%

Example Support Comments: "Build it NOW", "Complete 526!", "Much Needed"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Do not support this wasteful project." "I will not vote for the tax if this project isn't separated." "Is this project REALLY going to do \$1.8B worth of traffic improvements?"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "This should be voted on separately.", "The price tag will only grow.", "This should be the LAST priority."



MARK CLARK EXTENSION



RIVERS AVENUE MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$142,000,000

Construct a series of missing sidewalks/multi-use paths within one-half mile of the LCRT stations along Rivers Avenue corridor (US-58/US-72) between Medical Plaza Drive and Hackemann Avenue to facilitate bicycle/pedestrian access.

- Total Comments Received = 262
- Support Rate = 79%

Example Support Comments:

"Do it!", "Very Important", "This is a much needed project"

Example Oppose Comments: "Let North Charleston pay for it", "No, build roads", "Find funds rather than charge residents MORE"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "Complete 526!", "I have no opinion on this specific project", "The van merge from 526 to 26 is abysmal"





RIVERS AVENUE MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS





NORTHBRIDGE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$83,000,000

Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety by constructing a standalone bridge alongside the Northbridge to connect bike/pedestrian facilities on Sam Rittenberg Boulevard to Azalea Drive.

- Total Comments Received = 325
- Support Rate = 77%

Example Support Comments: "Absolutely 1000% needed" "Critically important", I like this project, there is no room for bikers or pedestrians on this major artery"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Against, the whole bridge needs to be replaced" "Need something but not this", "NOT NEEDED! The greenway is barely used anyway!" Example Inconclusive Comments: "Show the studies, cost and advantages", "Finish 526 please!", "Too expensive for a ped crossing"



NORTHBRIDGE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



RIVERS AVENUE OVERPASS AT DURANT

Estimated Cost = \$76,500,000

Construct a new overpass over the rail line between Durant Avenue and Aragon Street to improve traffic efficiency and safety. Project may also feature the installation of bike/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 206
- Support Rate = 76%

Example Support Comments:

"A good choice" "Do it! Please" "I support this project that actually increases traffic flow and safety"

Example Oppose Comments:

"No more government spending", "Not a priority", "Not enough benefit overall for the money spent"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "Amtrak can pay for this", "Bike/pedestrian accommodations should be a last resort to the taxpayers" The SPA should pay for this project"





RIVERS AVENUE OVERPASS AT DURANT





MALL DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$72,000,000

Capacity enhancements along Mall Drive (SC-790) between Lacross Road and Rivers Avenue including bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 163
- Support Rate = 58%

Example Support Comments:

"Build this project", "I agree with this project. The new hospital is coming and with that will be the need to improve access", "YES"

Example Oppose Comments: "Low priority", "Defer, not a priority issue", "NO NO NO"

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> **Example Inconclusive Comments:** "Why is this a priority?", "Engage with Mall redevelopment entities to help fund this", "There are many trees in the center of rivers avenue, please don't remove them"



MALL DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS



GLENN MCCONNELL OVERPASS

Estimated Cost = \$194,000,000

Construct an overpass for eastbound traffic on Glenn McConnell Parkway (SC-461) at intersection with Magwood Drive to improve traffic flow.

- Total Comments Received = 270
- Support Rate = 79%

Example Support Comments: "Build it ASAP", "Get it done!" "This is needed especially when the Glenn McConnell improvements are completed"

Example Oppose Comments: "Against", "No, not a priority", "This project should be removed from the project list"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "How much was just spent on this?", SCDOT should be paying for this as part of the 526 widening", This wouldn't have been necessary if people hadn't developed all the swamp land on Bees Ferry"

GLENN MCCONNELL OVERPASS



SOUTH US-17 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$327,500,000

Capacity enhancements and intersection improvements along Savannah Highway (US-17) between Dobbin Road and Highway 162.

- Total Comments Received = 227
- Support Rate = 83%

Example Support Comments:

"A resounding YES! Help us, please", "Definitely needed. This should be a priority over the Mark Clark Extension" "Make this happen while you can still get control of it"

Example Oppose Comments: "Doesn't impact me so I vote no", "No. Too expensive", Don't see the need"





Example Inconclusive Comments: "Needs lights", "Can you be any more vague?" Please..." "Developers need to pay impact fees"

SOUTH US-17 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS



SOUTH US-17 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS (REDUCED LENGTH)

Estimated Cost = \$174,000,000

Capacity enhancements and intersection improvements along Savannah Highway (US-17) between Dobbin Road and Main Road.

- Total Comments Received = 250
- Support Rate = 87%

Example Support Comments:

"100% this needs to be expanded", "Build this high-priority road project", I support this effort to improve capacity"

Example Oppose Comments: "Disagree", "No new taxes", "NO. Leave the rural areas alone."



Example Inconclusive Comments: "526 will help this" "This was supposed to be financed by last tax increase" "Speed up the flyover at Main Road/Hwy 17"

SOUTH US-17 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS (REDUCED LENGTH)



ASHLEY RIVER ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$144,000,000

Capacity enhancements along Ashley River Road (SC-61) from Bees Ferry Road to Paul Cantrell Boulevard, including new bridges over Church Creek and the CSX rail line, with bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 263
- Support Rate = 83%

Example Support Comments:

"A must!", "Anything to fix traffic on Hwy 61 for the love of GOD!", "Highly in favor of this project"

Example Oppose Comments:

"No. Reduced length preferred", "This project should be removed from the project list", "I do not support this project because I don't traverse this area often enough"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "Additional lighting and paint division lines", "Bike/pedestrian accommodations should be a last resort to the taxpayers", "Split this from the 526 extension"

ASHLEY RIVER ROAD IMPROVEMENTS



ASHLEY RIVER ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (REDUCED LENGTH)

Estimated Cost = \$102,000,000

Capacity enhancements along Ashley River Road (SC-61) from Bees Ferry Road to Old Parsonage Road, including new bridges over Church Creek and the CSX rail line, with bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 218
- Support Rate = 80%

Example Support Comments: "A good choice", "Absolutely NEEDED!!!", "Desperately need this project"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Capacity enhancements are not needed or desired", "Nice to have, not need to have, drop it", "Not important" 17

Example Inconclusive Comments: "Lighting and no removal of historic oak trees", "Either worlds", Bike and pedestrian access cannot be a priority until basic infrastructure is addressed"



ASHLEY RIVER ROAD IMPROVEMENTS (REDUCED LENGTH)



ASHLEY RIVER ROAD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$56,000,000

Intersection improvements along Ashley River Road (SC-61) between Village Green/West Bridge Road and Bees Ferry Road to improve traffic efficiency and safety.

- Total Comments Received = 192
- Support Rate = 80%

Example Support Comments:

"Ashley River needs any improvements possible", "Complete this project-SC 61 is a nightmare to enter!", "Many years too late, but approve of"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Defer for later date in favor of the other Ashley River Road improvements", "No, private community access issue", "Not Needed"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "Ad traffic circles!", How about putting stop lights and reduce the speed", "Complete i526"

ASHLEY RIVER ROAD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS





Estimated Cost = \$36,500,000

Improvements to the US-17/SC-61 off-ramp to reduce road closures during heavy rains/high tides. This project may feature bike/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 236
- Support Rate = 89%

Example Support Comments:

"All projects needed to address flooding should be priority projects", "Critical with increasingly rising waters and for bike/ped connectivity", "Floods often fix it"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Waste of money", "Other projects would be a better spend", "Not a priority"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "May include?", Improve drainage not roads", "Just say for flood safety"

US-17/SC-61 EXIT RAMP IMPROVEMENTS





MEETING STREET OVERPASS AT MILFORD STREET

Estimated Cost = \$65,000,000

Construct a new overpass over the rail line at Meeting Street/Milford Street to improve traffic safety and efficiency.

- Total Comments Received = 154
- Support Rate = 68%

Example Support Comments:

"Should be prioritized", "Always yes, we see to many accidents and traffic due to cars and trains sharing roads", "This project is very needed"

Example Oppose Comments:

"The costly expense of these overpasses could be better spent elsewhere", "Irrelevant to the rest of us", "The builder and people who moved to this location moved to the condition. Let them pay for the overpass



Example Inconclusive Comments: "Downtown Charleston has more than enough of our taxpayer money", "Why isn't the state paying for all these rail bridges?", "Split this from the 526 extension"

MEETING STREET OVERPASS AT MILFORD STREET



MAYBANK HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS (EASTERN PORTION)

Estimated Cost = \$51,550,000

Capacity enhancements to Maybank Highway (SC-700) between River Road and the Stono River Bridge along with bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 427
- Support Rate = 93%

Example Support Comments:

"Absolutely! This should have happened years ago", "Critical for John's Island", "For the love of GOD, please complete this project"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Drop all the ridiculous bike accommodations", "Leave Maybank Highway alone", "No. This should be designated a scenic highway with funds diverted to complete 526"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "Last tax was supposed to cover this", This was supposedly included in the 2004 and 2016

referenda. What happened?", "Need a left turn lane for the High School"

MAYBANK HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS (EASTERN PORTION)


MAYBANK HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS (WESTERN PORTION)

Estimated Cost = \$126,000,000

Capacity enhancements to Maybank Highway (SC-700) between Bohicket Road and River Road along with bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 417
- Support Rate = 93%

Example Support Comments:

"A necessity to safety in this area", "Absolutely critical. Need this like yesterday!" "Critical for those living on Johns Island"

Example Oppose Comments:

"I don't think this is necessarily and no removal of oak trees", "Why would anyone walk or ride a bike on this road? Widening the road is more important", "No. You created the problem with the Fenwick development"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "Again, does this reference Rational Roads solution for Main Road", "I'm almost never on that road. For good reason", "Should fix River road between maybank and main instead"



MAYBANK HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS (WESTERN PORTION)



HARBOR VIEW ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$110,000,000

Capacity enhancements along Harbor View Road (S-1028) from the James Island Connector to North Shore Drive with bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 221
- Support Rate = 78%

Example Support Comments:

"Agree, we need traffic relief and pedestrian and bicycle access", "Really needed badly", "Long overdue"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Is this really needed?", "This is an environmentally sensitive area and there should be no more improvements to encourage more cars", "No harbor view was just improved"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "Not super bad traffic here", "Wasn't this just constructed?", "That's a lot for a few bikes, do it inhouse vs scamming contractors"



HARBOR VIEW ROAD IMPROVEMENTS





FOLLY ROAD BIKE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$30,500,000

Installation of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations along Folly Road (SC-171) between George Griffith Boulevard and Sol Legare Road to include the installation of a sidewalk along Sol Legare Road from Folly Road to the boat landing.

- Total Comments Received = 250
- Support Rate = 82%

Example Support Comments:

"Agree, we need these improvements for safety reasons", "People need a safe non-motorized path that will get to Folly Beach", "Yes to protecting cyclists and pedestrians"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Build roads, not bike or pedestrian paths", "Too much for bikes – small percent use them", "Not as important as roads"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "How much will it cost?", "I think lights in this area are needed", "I can see doing this if I526 is dropped"

FOLLY ROAD BIKE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



JOHNNIE DODDS CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$168,000,000

Capacity enhancements along Johnnie Dodds (US-17) between Houston Northcutt Boulevard and Bowman Road, including an overpass at Houston Northcutt along with other intersection improvements.

- Total Comments Received = 160
- Support Rate = 54%

Example Support Comments:

"So much traffic on Johnnie Dodds. Need overpass", "Absolutely needed", "Would greatly improve Ravenel bridge congestion"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Overpasses create blight and are terrible for surrounding businesses and communities", Do not include-thousands and thousands of residents injected to this before!"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "More lanes?", "Get rid of the light on 17 at Dragoon Dr.", "Mount Pleasant doesn't need more of our money"



JOHNNIE DODDS CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS





MOUNT PLEASANT WAY BIKE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$158,000,000

Installation of multi-use paths in various locations that will link key portions of the Town of Mount Pleasant including recreational facilities, parks, schools, neighborhoods, commercial zones, etc.

- Total Comments Received = 202
- Support Rate = 66%

Example Support Comments:

"I think this would be extremely beneficial to our community", "Non-car options desperately needed in Mt Pleasant", "This should be included and is important to the safety of residents"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Should not be considered. The town of Mt pleasant should pay for this", "Nothing for Mount Precious", "Why they have plenty money over there"

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> **Example Inconclusive Comments:** "Plan needs editing to consider approving", "MtP has received a huge amount of funding for road projects already to the detriment of other areas of the County", "Would be in favor of more specifics"



MOUNT PLEASANT WAY BIKE/PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS



LONG POINT ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Estimated Cost = \$126,000,000

Corridor improvements along Long Point Road (S-97) from Whipple Road to US-17 to reduce road closures during heavy rains/high tides. This project may also feature intersection improvements and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 161
- Support Rate = 68%

Example Support Comments:

"Imperative! Floods all the time", "30 years overdue", "Due to that continuing flooding issue this should be a high priority"

Example Oppose Comments:

"This is not substantially needed", "We only support the intersection improvements and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations", "This project can wait"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "How about affordable housing", "No to bike and pedestrian spending", "Why can't the Ports Authority pay for improvements on Long Point instead of our tax dollars"



LONG POINT ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS



DARRELL CREEK TRAIL REALIGNMENT

Estimated Cost = \$46,000,000

Realignment of Darrell Creek Trail to intersect with Lieben Road, as well as the connection of Darrell Creek Trail to Tupelo Forest neighborhood. This project may also feature intersection improvements and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations.

- Total Comments Received = 199
- Support Rate = 68%

Example Support Comments:

"It's needed in a very bad way so many near misses merging", "Fantastic idea that would improve traffic in a challenging area", "Good idea so people will not have to walk on Rt. 17 where it is dangerous"

Example Oppose Comments:

"May cause a lot of unwanted traffic thru neighborhoods", "Low priority and not much of a problem currently", "Definitely no. Mt. Pleasant gets everything"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "The town should fund it", "Let the developers pay for this", "Bike/pedestrian accommodations should be a last resort to the taxpayers"



DARRELL CREEK TRAIL REALIGNMENT



CHUCK DAWLEY BLVD. & COLEMAN/BEN SAWYER BLVD. **INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS**

Estimated Cost = \$29,500,000

Reconstruct the intersection of Chuck Dawley Boulevard (SC-526) & Coleman/Ben Sawyer Boulevard (SC-703) to improve safety and efficiency along with traffic improvements.

- Total Comments Received = 137
- Support Rate = 58%

Example Support Comments:

"This is the perfect spot for a traffic circle, pedestrian access is scary/non-existent", This would be a worthwhile improvement", "Much needed!"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Nope, not a problem", "The only addition needed at this intersection are crosswalk signals for pedestrians", "Focus more on West Ashley, they have gotten enough"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "Complete 526!", "Roundabout", "Oppose this tax in every way"





CHUCK DAWLEY BLVD. & COLEMAN/BEN SAWYER BLVD. INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS



CARTA/BRT OPERATIONS

Estimated Funding = \$648,000,000 (≈ 12% of 3rd TST Potential Distributions)

- Total Comments Received = 362
- Support Rate = 78%

Example Support Comments:

"Excellent use of public funds", "Government needs to whole heartedly support mass transit", "Anything that could reduce the number of vehicles on the road is a wise future investment"

Example Oppose Comments:

"Buses are terrible. Invest in rail", "I'm not sure anyone will use it", "We have WAY more people affected by the road mess than use CARTA"



Example Inconclusive Comments: "Against taking parking from fair grounds", "Bring in private funding", "Need a train that runs along 26 to and from Summerville"

GREENBELT PROGRAM

Estimated Funding = \$432,000,000 (≈ 8% of 3rd TST Potential Distributions)

- Total Comments Received = 373
- Support Rate = 87%

Example Support Comments:

"Need to up the percentage to at least 15%", "Essential to maintain character of the County in the face of expected development pressure", "Love Greenbelt and will always vote for greenbelt funding, UNLESS it is attached to 526 funding"

Example Oppose Comments:

"While the Greenbelt Program is important, fixing and maintaining our roads should be a priority", "It is a step by the government to control more land use rights and should not even be considered"

Example Inconclusive Comments: "This should be voted on separately from taxes for roads", "Some funds should be included, \$430 million sounds like a lot", "Complete 526!"



GENERAL COMMENTS

Staff received approximately 490 General Comments on the online comment form. Many comments had similar "themes" such as:

- Separating the vote for the Mark Clark Extension from other projects/programs.
- Completing the Mark Clark Extension and/or focusing on road improvements for vehicular traffic rather than bicycle/pedestrian improvements.
- Prioritizing bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure and mass transit to reduce the reliance on motor vehicles for transportation.
- Focusing transportation improvements on Johns Island where major growth is occurring and West Ashley.
- Restricting future development until transportation infrastructure can catch up and keep pace with growth and why citizens must carry the cost burden for improvements rather than developers.
- Slow implementation of projects from 1st and 2nd Transportation Sales Tax is not encouraging citizens to vote for a 3rd.
- Concern over lack of specific details about the proposed projects' scope of work and schedule.

QUESTIONS?

