



526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

*Developing a Mega Transportation Project
For the Region's Future Travel Demand*



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration





I-526 Lowcountry Corridor

West & East

Two Projects under development along the exiting I-526 Corridor:

West: *Paul Cantrell to Virginia Ave, includes reconstruction of the I-26 and I-526 System to System Interchange*

ENVIRONMENTAL PHASE of WORK

East: *Virginia Ave to US 17 in Mount Pleasant*

PLANNING PHASE of WORK

Transportation Project Planning

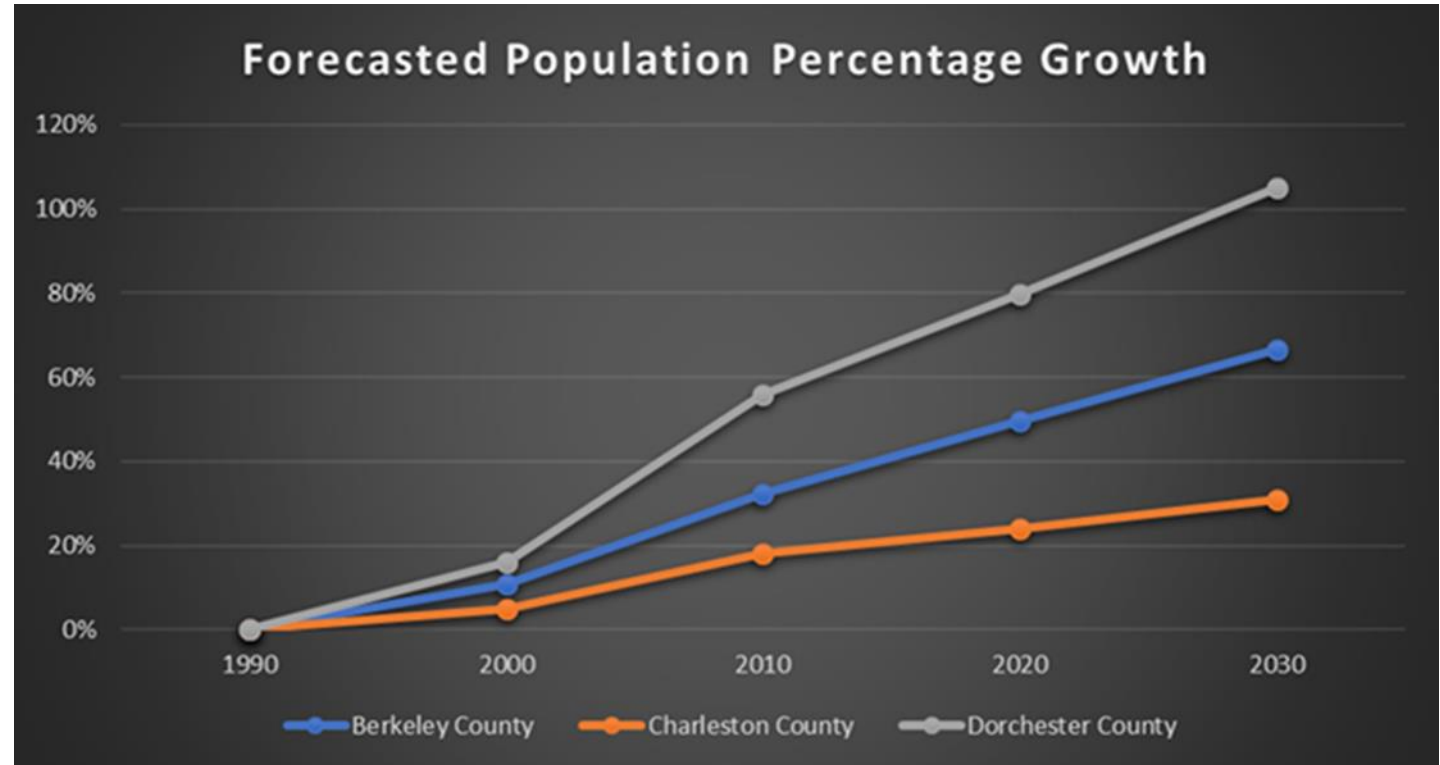
How did the I-526 Corridor become a project?

- I-526 identified as one of SC's most congested interstate routes in long range transportation plan
- I-526 Corridor Planning Study initiated in 2013



Regional Challenges – Rapid Growth

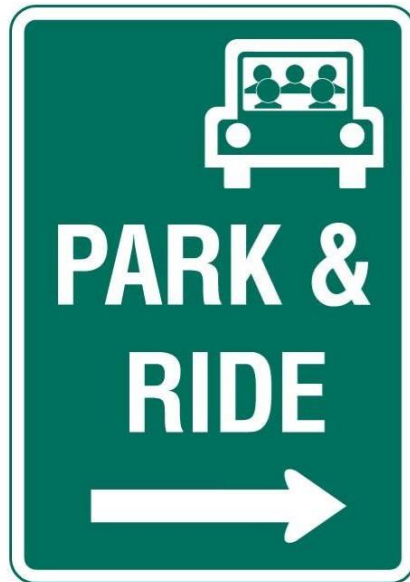
- 12th Fastest Growing Metro Area in the US
- 80% single occupancy vehicles
- Widening alone will not fully meet the region's rapidly increasing traffic demand



Preliminary Modal Strategies Implemented



Bus Rapid Transit



Park & Ride Facilities



**Vanpool / Carpool
Incentives**



**Managed Lanes Study
Transit Reliability**

Changing the way commuters think about mobility options....

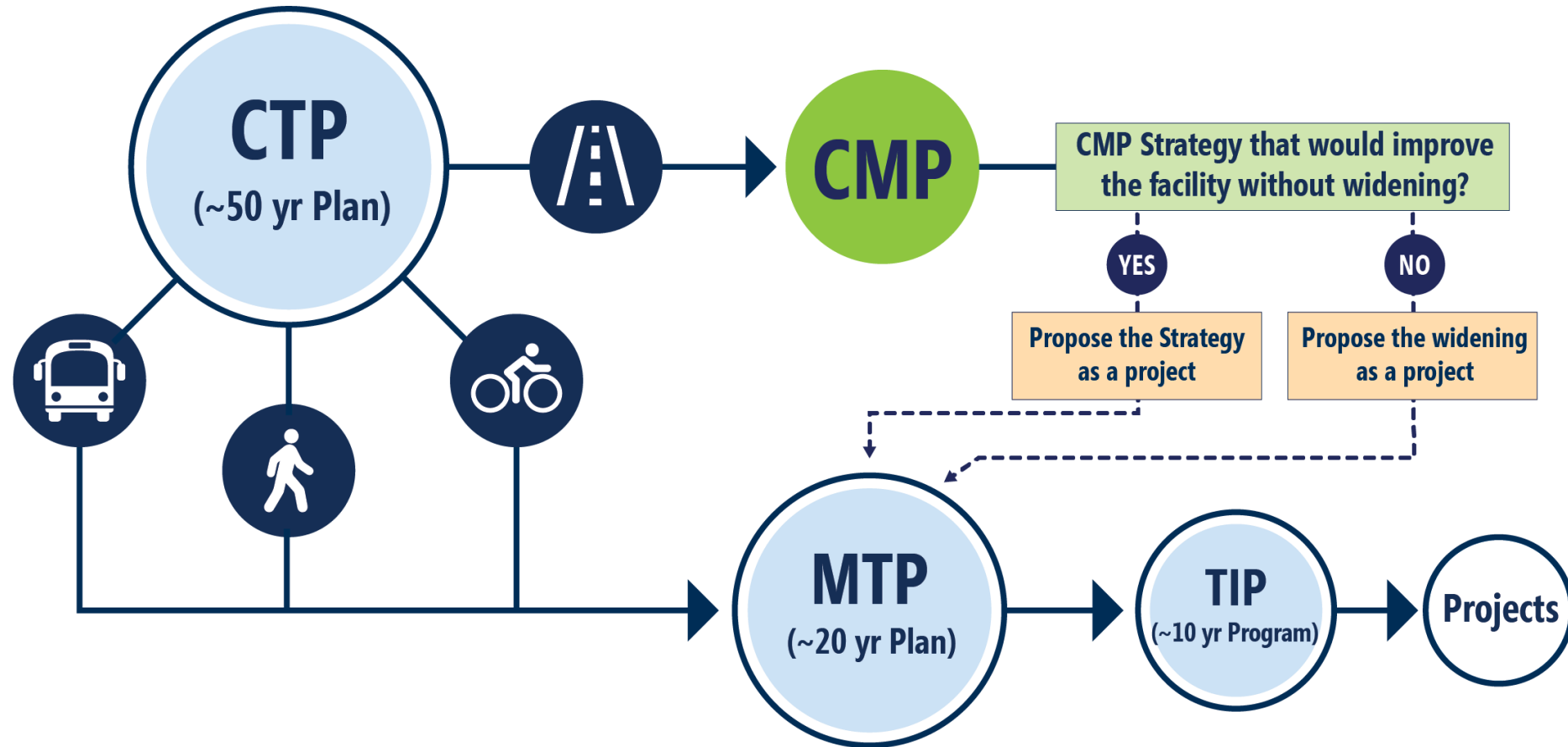
Interstate Congestion Management Plan

*Establishing a REGIONALLY accepted approach for **managing congestion** that meets state and local needs.*

CMP Development



How does the ICMP fit within the Transportation Planning Process?



Begin with the End in mind....

- ✓ Ensure that the **RIGHT** investments are made for the best **VALUE**
- ✓ Ensure that these improvements allow future congestion management options for the region





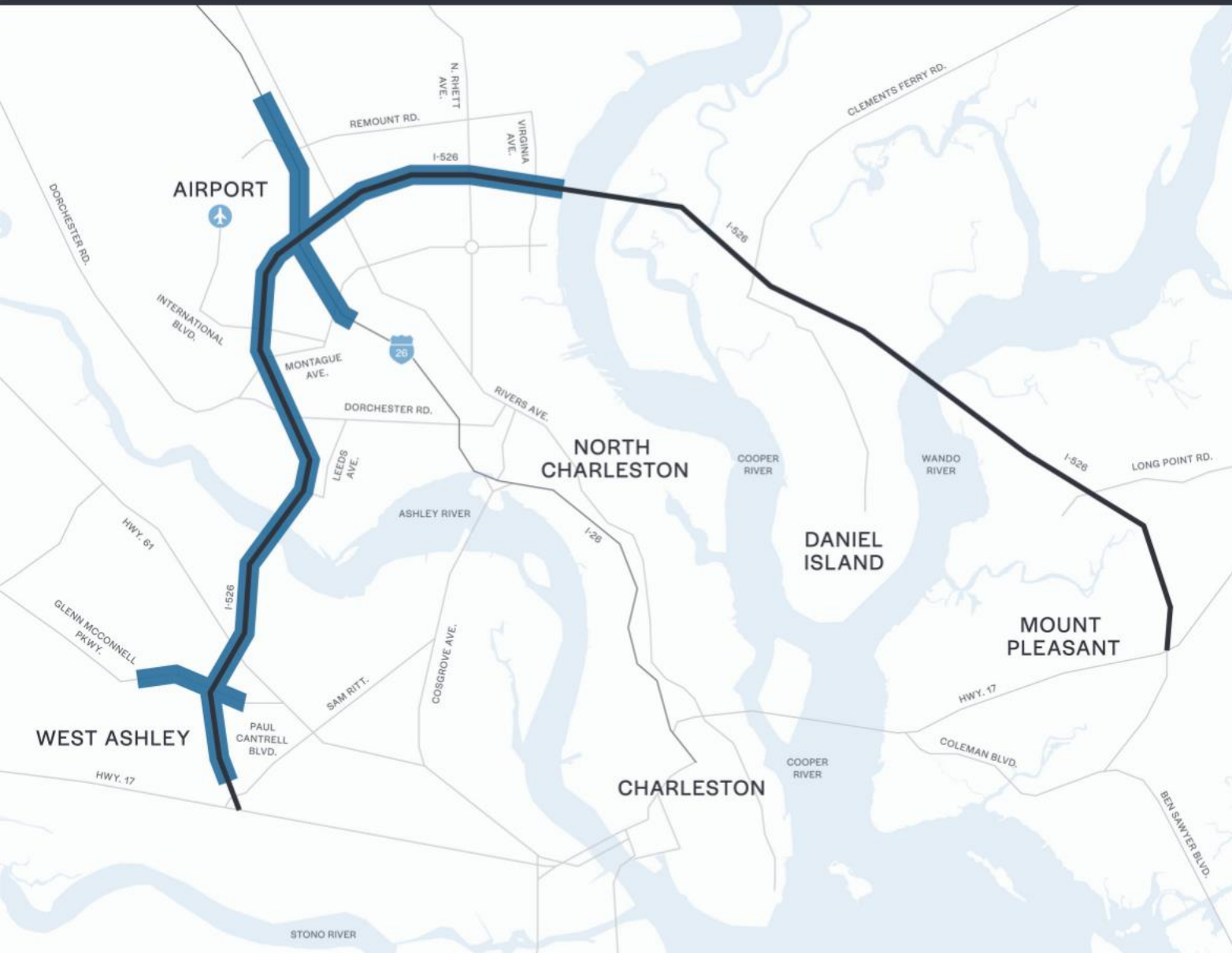
526 LOWCOUNTRY CORRIDOR

Project Delivery Plans



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I-526 Lowcountry Corridor **West**

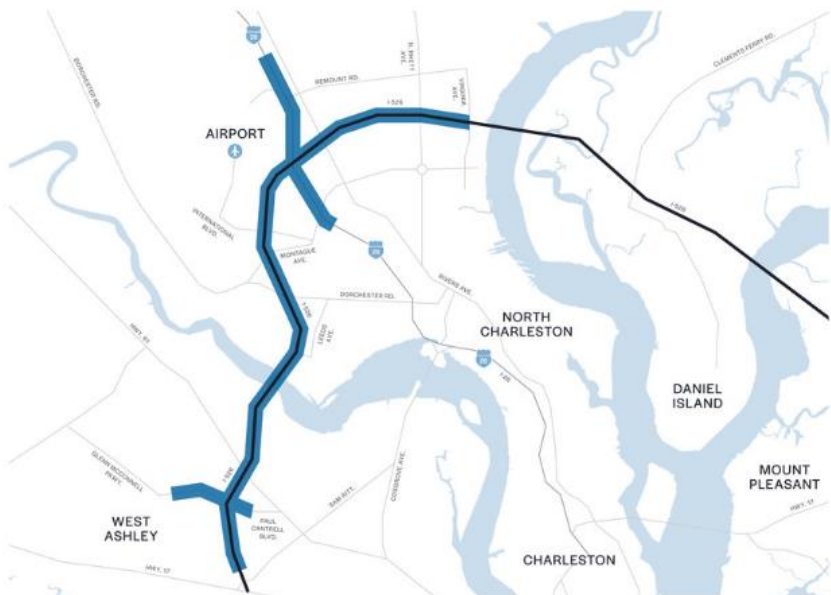
Project Termini

**Virginia Avenue
North Charleston**



**Paul Cantrell Boulevard
West Ashley**

Project Purpose: What is the reason for this project?



Increase Capacity

— and —

Improve Operations

at the I-26/I-526 interchange and
along the I-526 mainline from Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Boulevard

Project Need: Why?

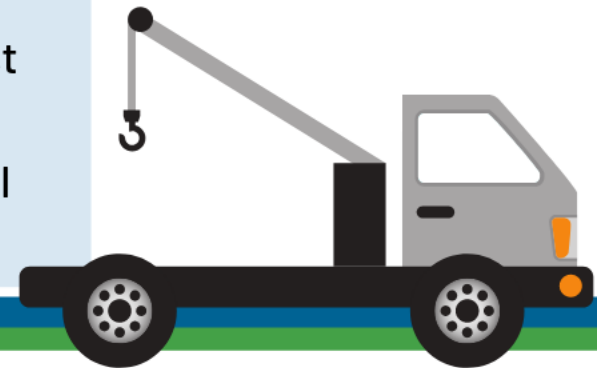


I-526 is one of South Carolina's most congested interstate segments

Congestion

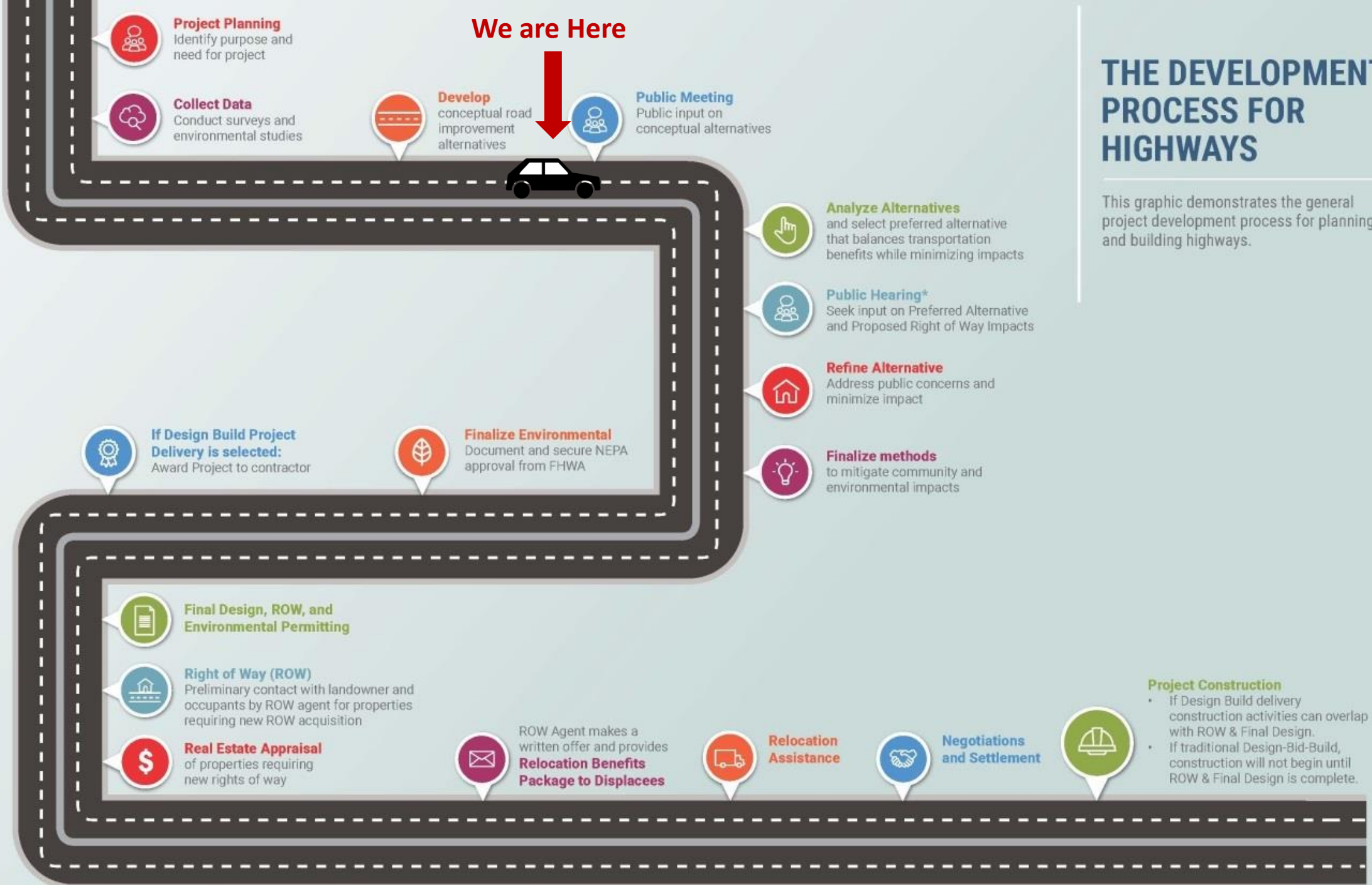
#2: 2035 CHATS LRTP

#6: SCDOT Interstate Capacity List
Top 20 most congested interstate
segments (SCDOT 2014 Multimodal
Transportation Plan)



THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR HIGHWAYS

This graphic demonstrates the general project development process for planning and building highways.



Where have we been?

2016

Public Involvement

- ✓ Environmental Studies
- ✓ Crash Analysis
- ✓ Growth Studies
- ✓ Design Criteria
- ✓ Geometric Deficiencies
- ✓ Peak Hour Travel Studies

2017

Public Involvement

- ✓ Traffic Modeling
- ✓ Managed Lanes Study
- ✓ Interchange & Mainline Alternative Studies
- ✓ Cost & Schedule Risk Analysis

2018

- ✓ Priorities Established
- ✓ Preliminary Relocation Impact Study
- ✓ Interchange Concepts
- ✓ NEPA Coordination for elevation to EIS

Where are we going?

2019



Public Involvement



2020



Public Involvement



2021



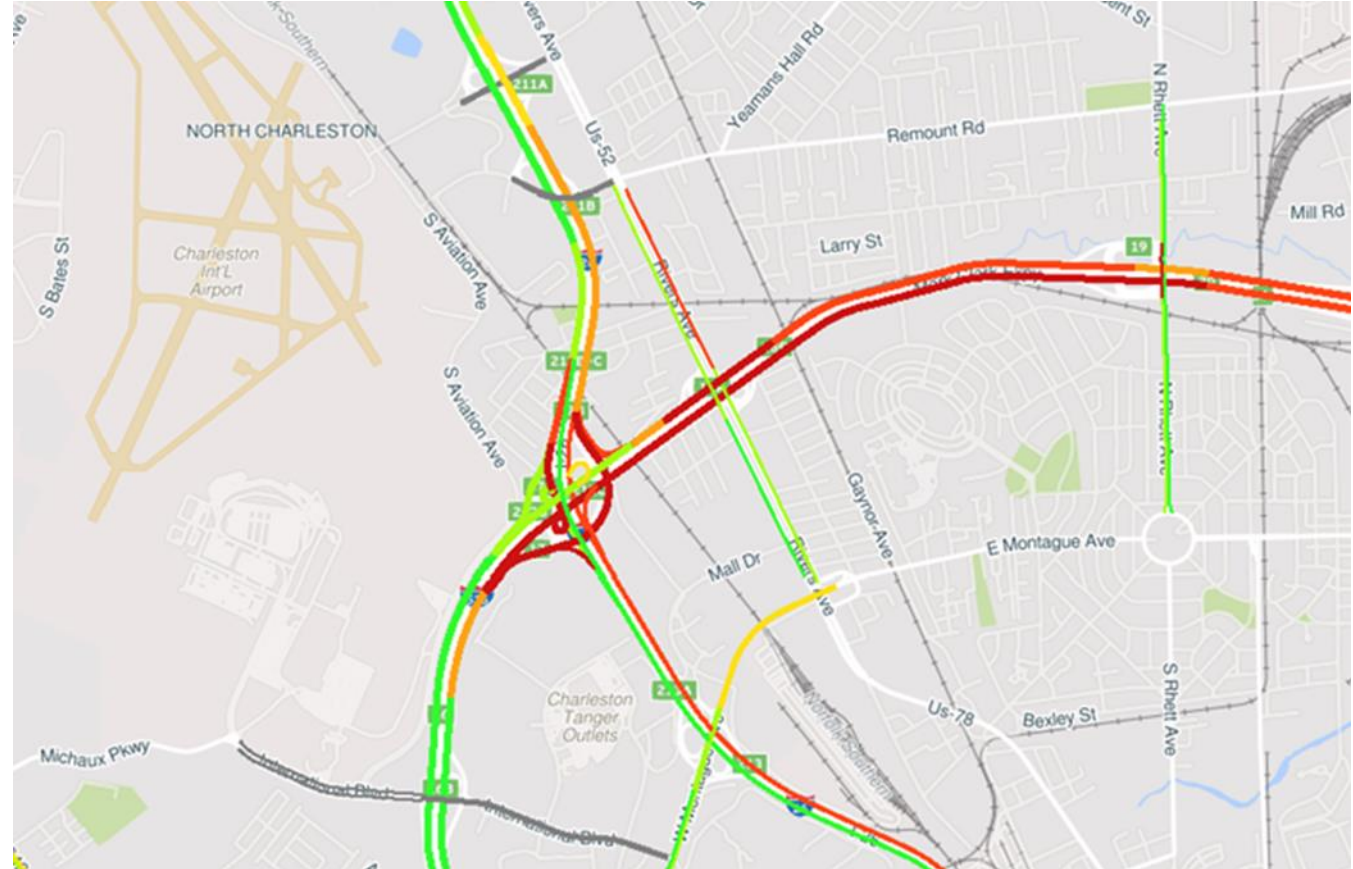
- ✓ Develop & Analyze Alternatives
- ✓ Community & Stakeholder Meetings
- ✓ Public Input on Alternatives
- ✓ Begin Developing Preferred Alternatives

- ✓ Refine Preferred Alternatives
- ✓ Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- ✓ Community & Stakeholder Meetings
- ✓ Environmental Permit Application

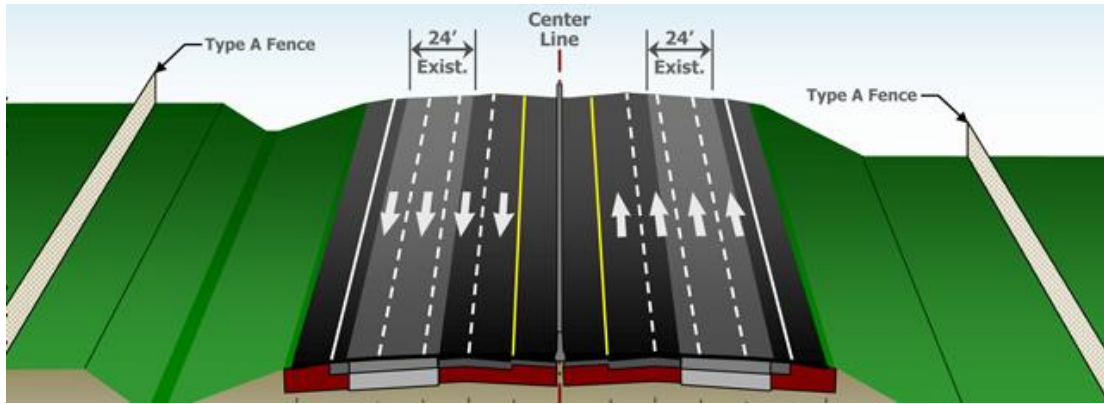
- ✓ Public Hearing
- ✓ Revise Preferred Alternative
- ✓ Finalize EIS
- ✓ FHWA Record of Decision & USACE Permit Decision

What did the updated traffic studies tell us?

- ✓ I-526 & I-26 Interchange is the major source of operational issues on the Corridor
- ✓ Mainline capacity is inadequate and additional travel lanes are needed
- ✓ Some of the closely spaced interchanges require ramp modifications in order to improve operations



Reasonable Range of Alternatives Finding Solutions that meet Purpose & Need



Mainline Typical Section

includes 8 lanes with 12 foot inside and outside shoulders

Alternative #1

- **Semi-Directional** System to System Interchange with CD system (Virginia to Montague)

Alternative #2

- **Turbine** System to System Interchange with CD system (Virginia to Montague)

Alternative #3 – NO BUILD

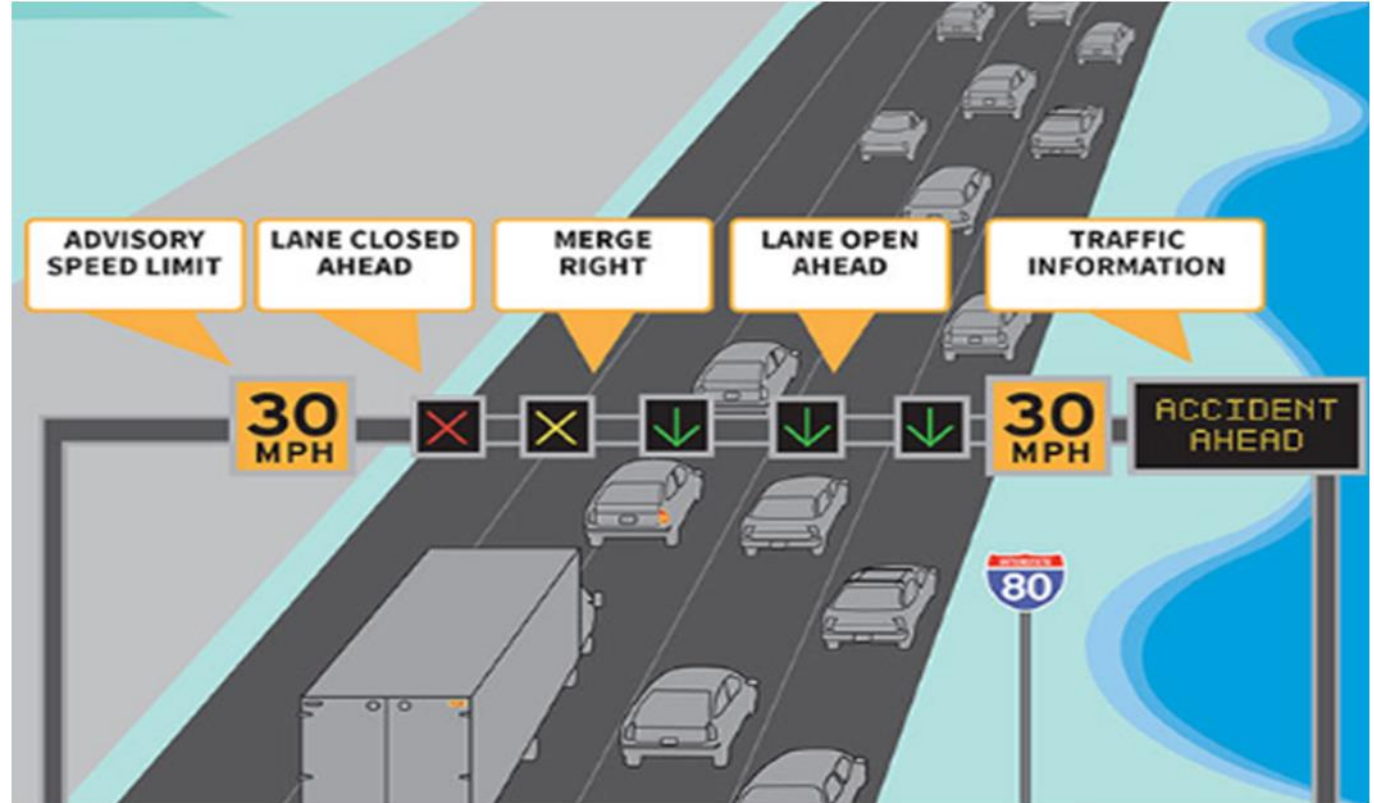
Will there be Managed Lanes on I-526?

- Corridor Study included a regional managed lane feasibility study
- Critical corridor for viability is on I-26 between University Blvd to I-526
- Proposed typical section would not preclude addition of managed lane in the future

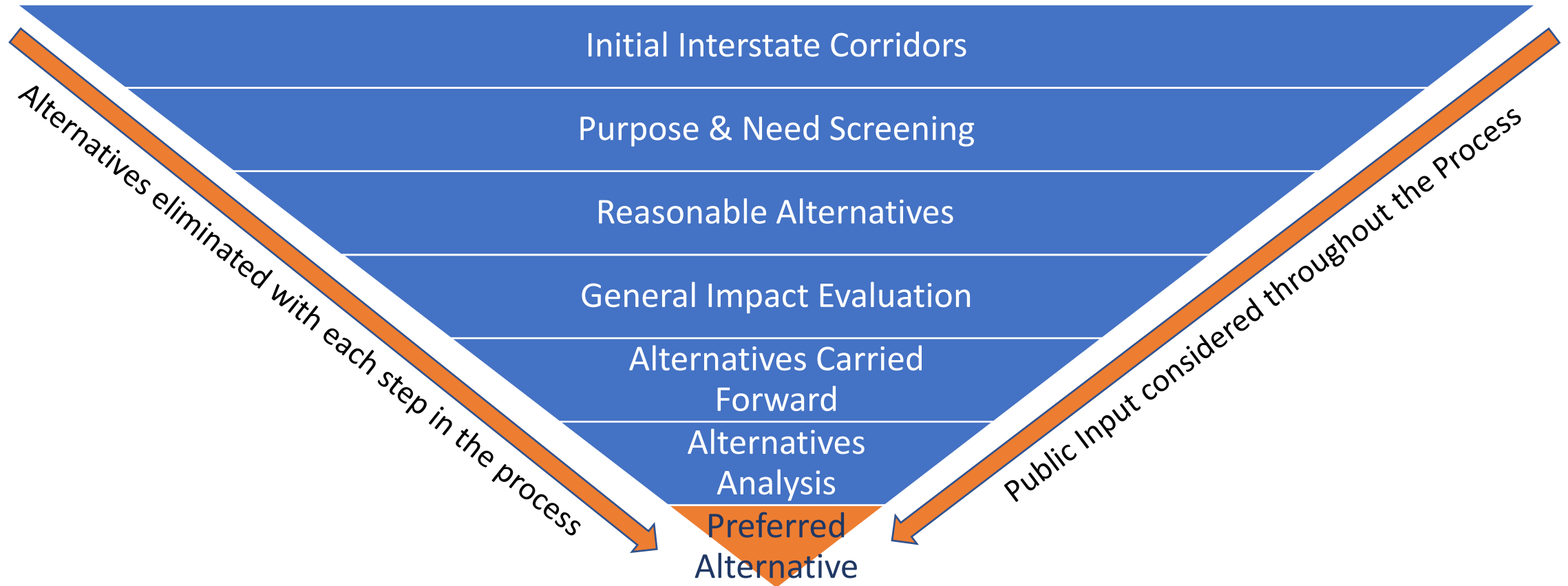


Future Corridor Operations Alternatives

- ☐ *Active Traffic Management*
- ☐ *Hard Shoulder Running during Peak Times*
- ☐ *Restriped HOT/HOV lane*
- ☐ *Bus on Shoulder*



How are improvement alternatives analyzed to find **BALANCE** of Purpose & Impacts?



Preliminary Impact Analysis

Identification of Project Challenges

Rights of Way

Replacement Housing Inventory

Affordable Housing for Tenants

Available Vacant Lots for Sale

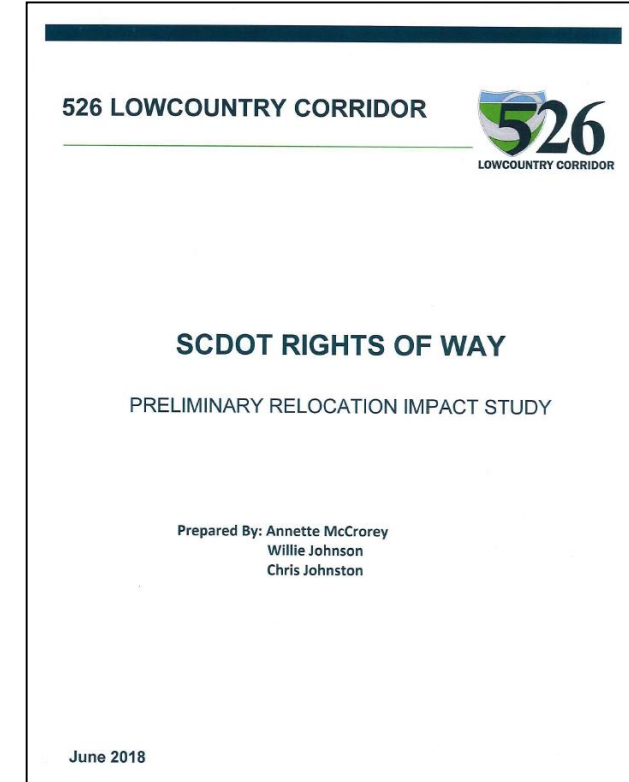
Relocation Options in Community

Environmental Justice Impacts



Preliminary ROW Relocation Impact Study

- ✓ Identified scale of potential ROW impacts
- ✓ Types of housing impacted
- ✓ Investigated availability of replacement housing in the community
- ✓ Recommended strategies to mitigate for challenges & potential opportunities



Significant Environmental Justice Community Impacts



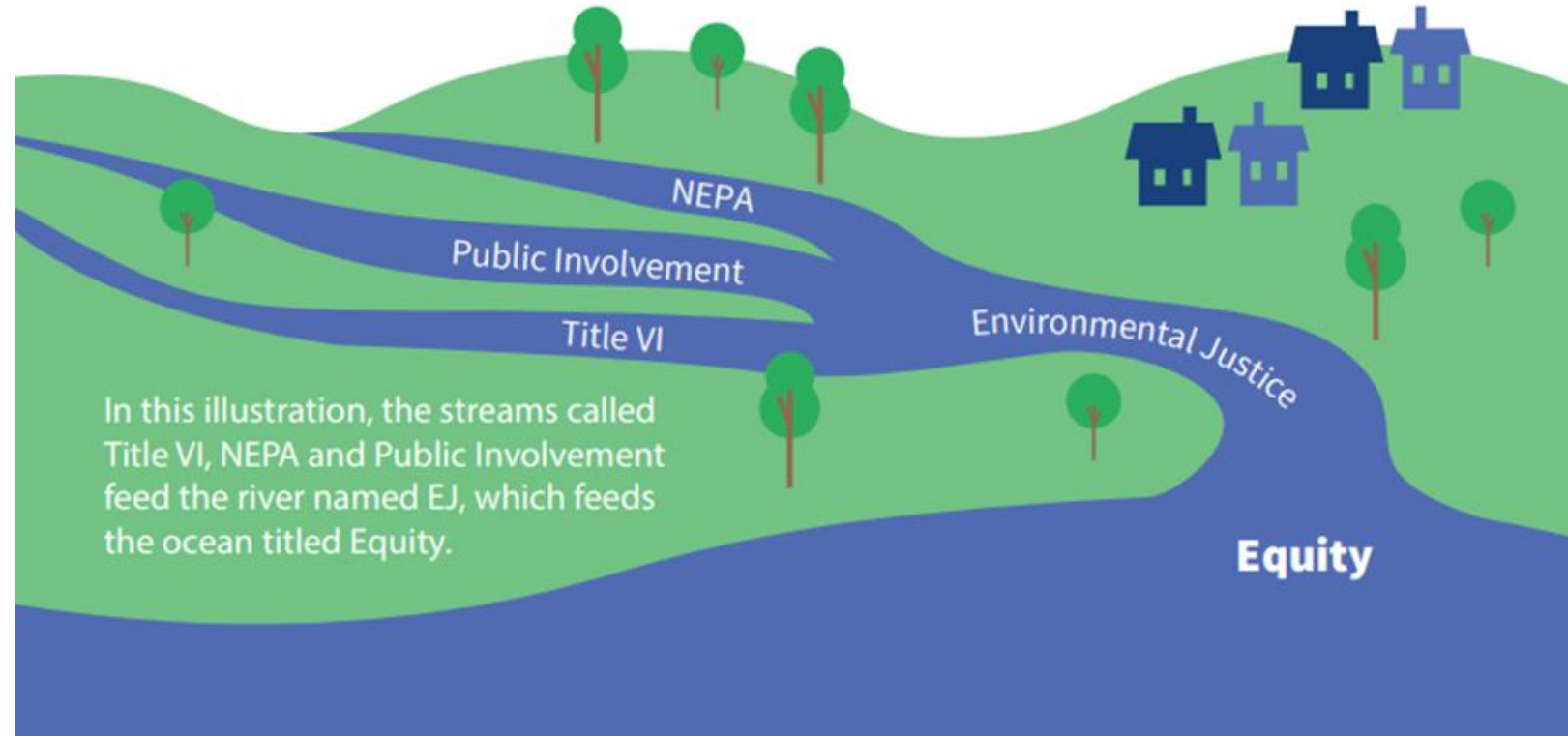
Right of Way RELOCATION IMPACTS	I-526 WEST Project EJ Impacts	I-526 WEST Project TOTAL
Apartment Units (16 Buildings/Duplexes)	68	68-90
Single Family Homes / Mobile Homes	44	48-67
Parks / Community Centers	2	2
TOTALS	114	159
Vacant Residential Parcels	34	41

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental Justice is the **fair treatment** and **meaningful involvement** of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the transportation decision making process.

Executive Order (EO) 12898

Coming Together for Equity



What does Fair Treatment look like?

Fair treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental and commercial operations or policies.

Equality



The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

Equity



Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

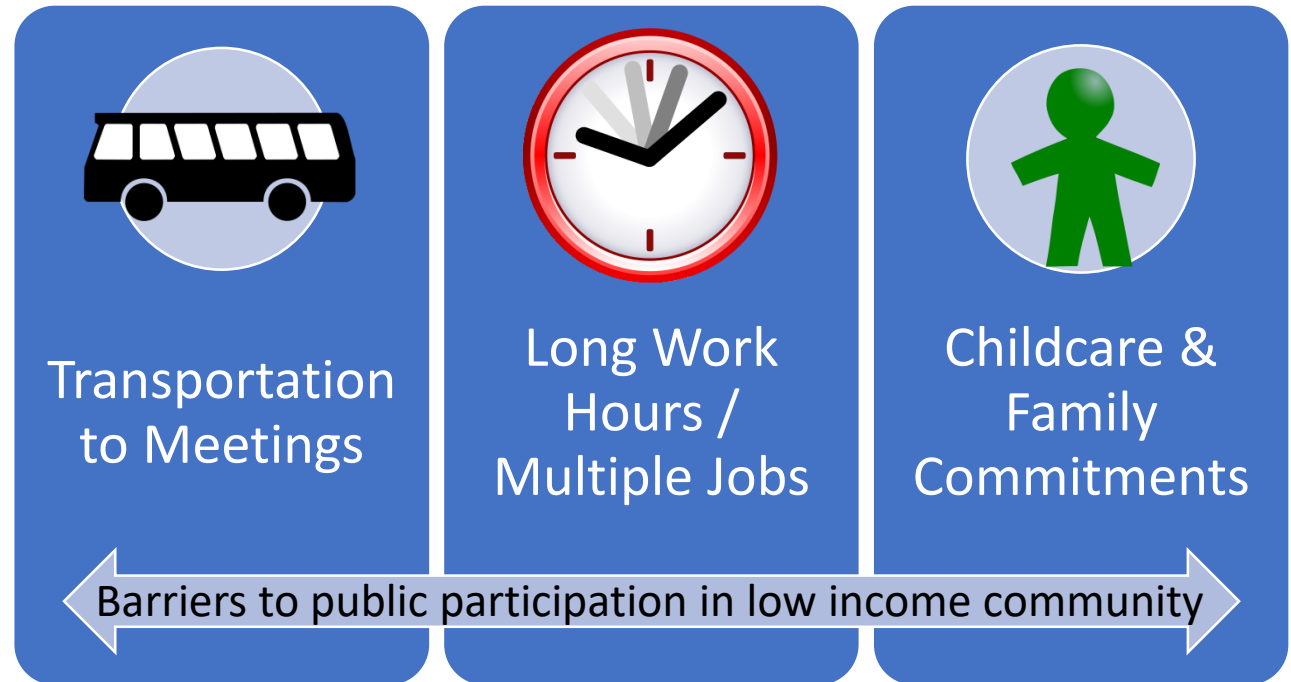
Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

What is Meaningful Involvement?

Meaningful involvement is created when decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of potentially affected communities so they can participate in the process, help identify community concerns, and influence decisions about activities that may affect their environment and health.

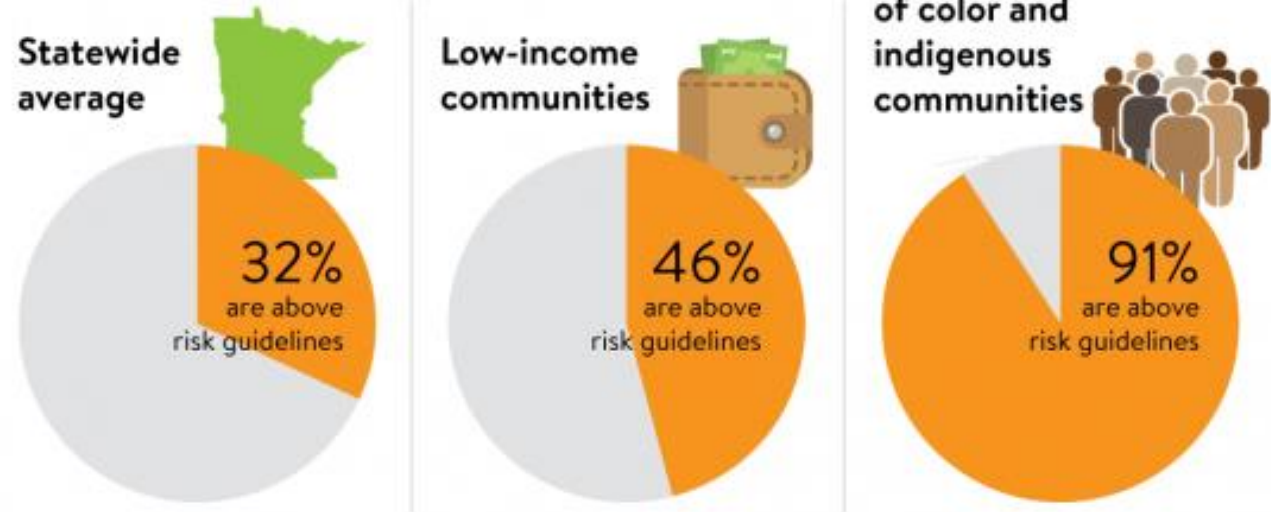


What are disproportionate impacts?

Disproportionate impacts refer to situations of concern on a project where there exists significantly **higher** and **more adverse** health and environmental impacts on minority populations and/or low income populations.

Air quality risk

These communities are more likely to be near higher levels of air pollution.

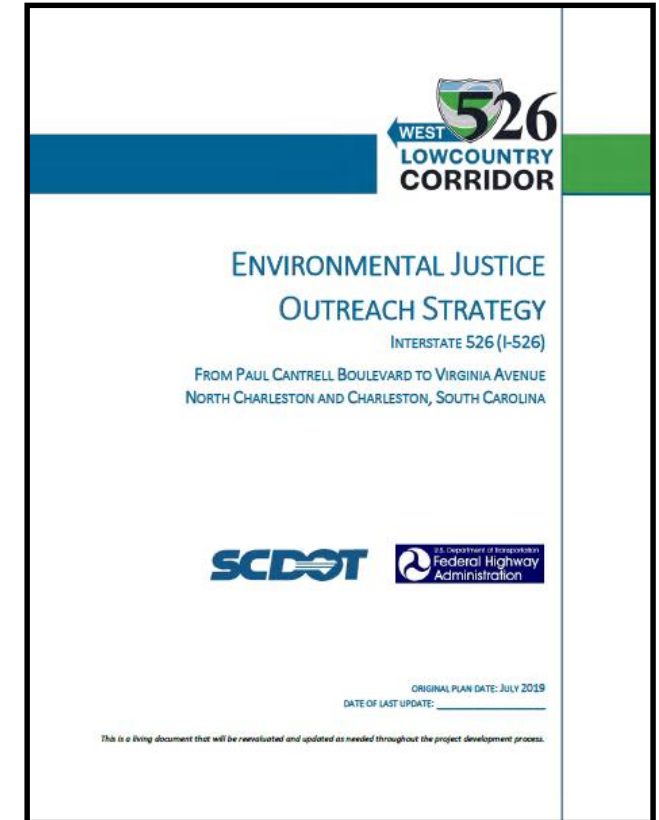
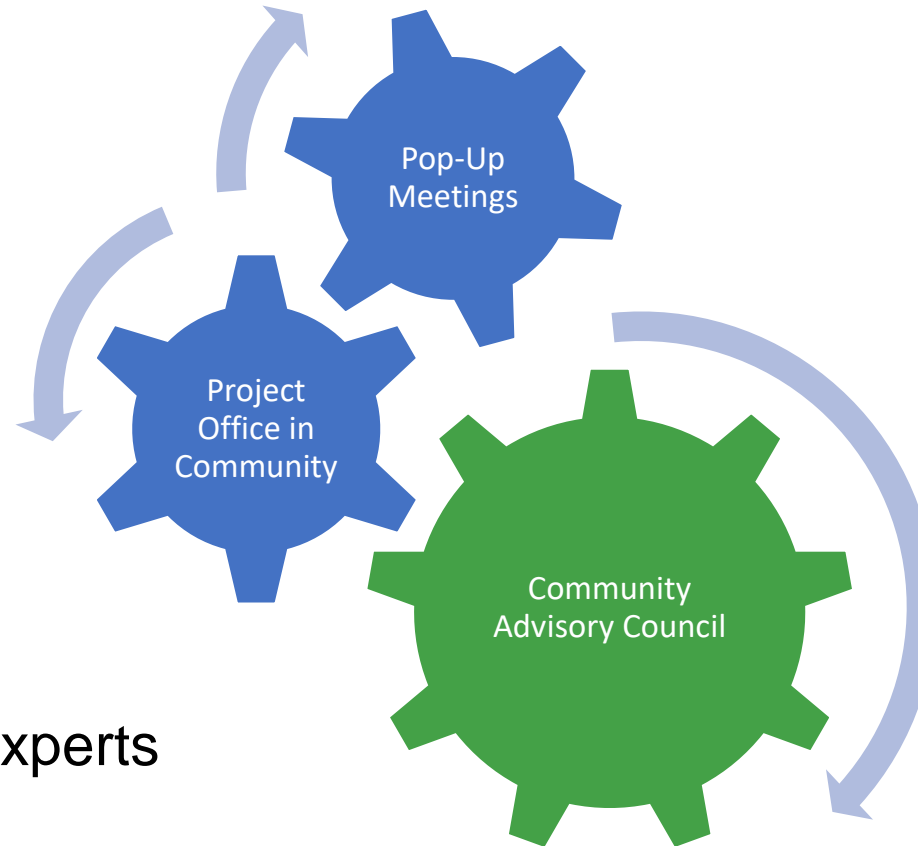


Environmental Justice Evaluation Process



Environmental Justice Outreach Plan

- ✓ Be Accessible
- ✓ Small Group Meetings
- ✓ Meet on Your Schedule
- ✓ Walkable Office Location
- ✓ Community Liaisons
- ✓ ROW Specialists
- ✓ Hotline to reach team
- ✓ Facilitate Council Meetings
- ✓ Access to Subject Matter Experts



Next Steps: Community Impact Studies

Community Impact Assessment Process



Ultimate Goal: Win-Win Community Mitigation Plan

- Identify **Opportunities** to Partner with local organizations
- Early ROW Program
- Organize **Community Advisory Council**
- Community members drive the decision making process on mitigation



How do we approach disproportionate impacts?



AVOID

MINIMIZE

MITIGATE

Mitigation Strategies Under Development



Develop a Construction Program for Replacement Housing in Community



Early ROW phase to identify or create Section 8 Housing Rental Units



Community Project Office

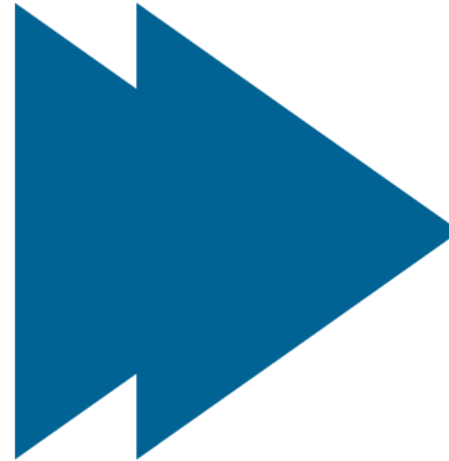


Community Outreach Specialists



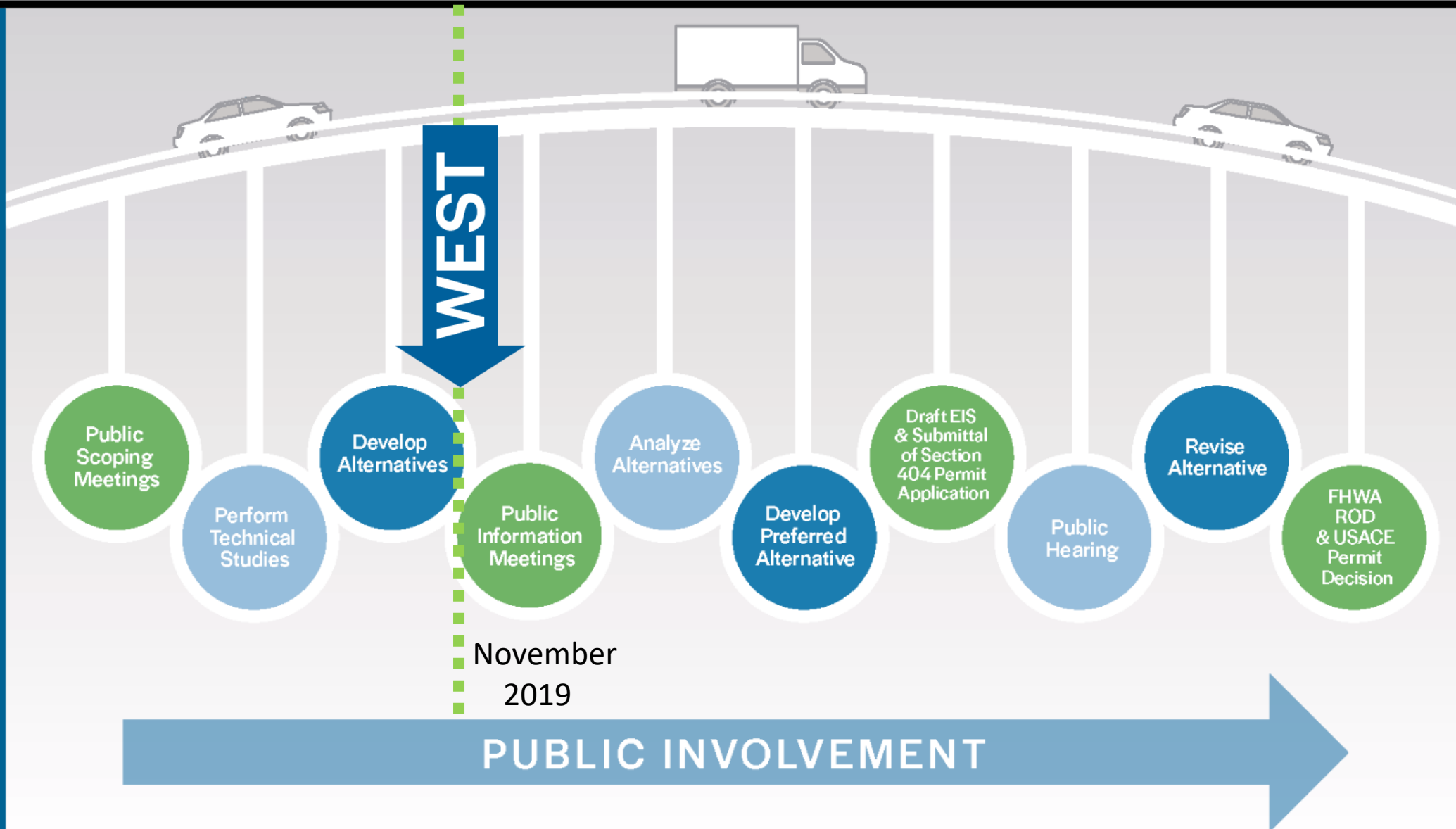
NEPA Update

Environmental
Assessment



Environmental
Impact
Statement

NEPA – Environmental Impact Statement Process



NEPA: One Federal Decision

Goals:

- ✓ Completion of all NEPA and Permitting within 2 years
- ✓ Active communication between agencies
- ✓ Concurrent reviews
- ✓ Development of a permitting timetable
- ✓ A commitment to the process and improvements of the process

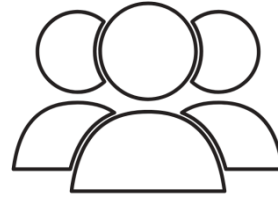
Upcoming Community Involvement



Community Meetings

Small groups in potentially affected communities

Early November



Public Information Meeting

Larger Meeting; Drop-in, informal style; Project team available to answer questions & hear concerns

Nov 21, 2019 | 11am-7pm
Charleston Area Convention Center

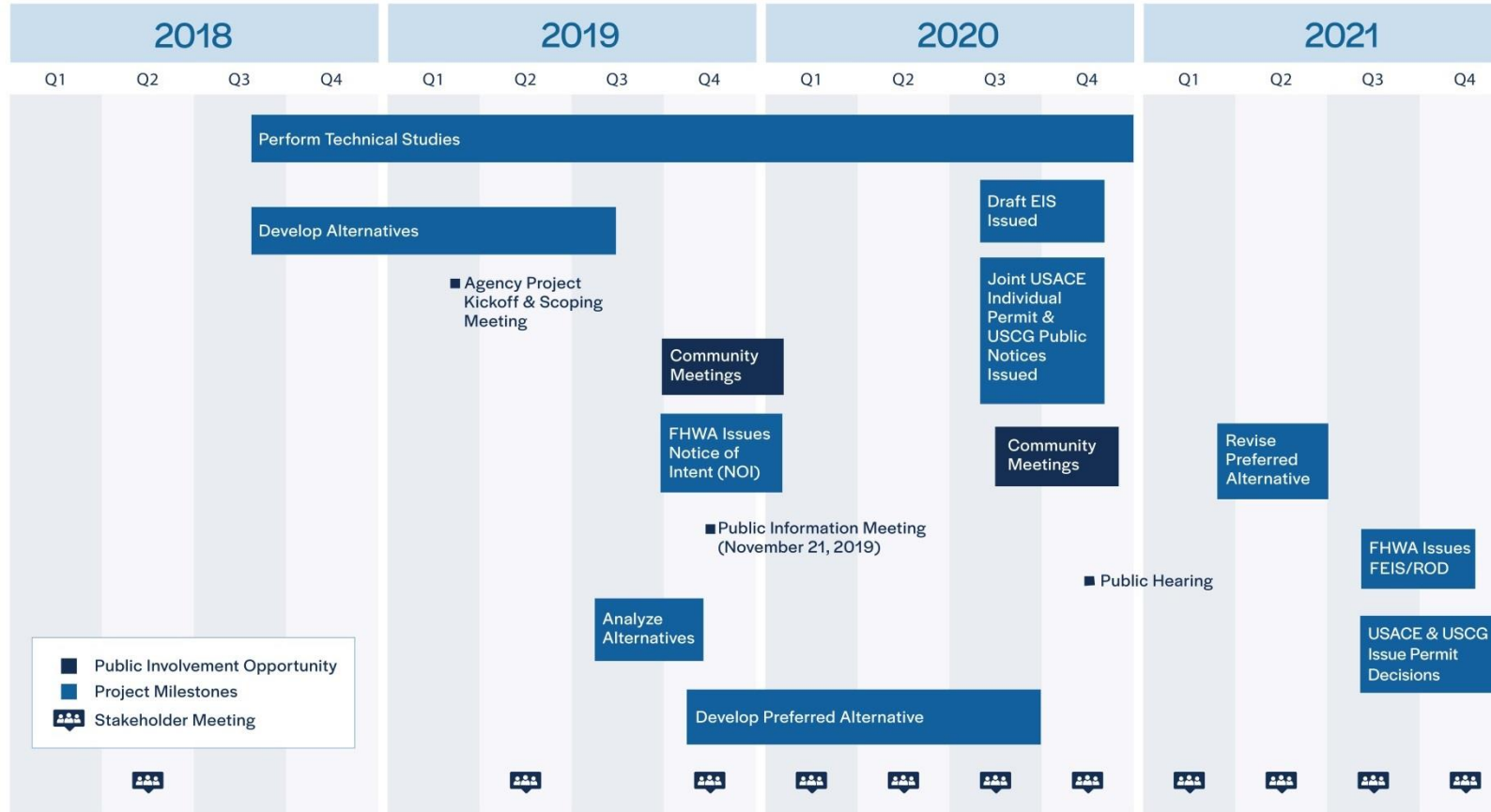


Virtual Meeting

Unable to attend in person? Join us online.

Nov 21 - Dec 21, 2019
526lowcountrycorridor.com

I-526 West Project Schedule





I-526 Lowcountry Corridor **East**

Project Termini

**Virginia Avenue
North Charleston**



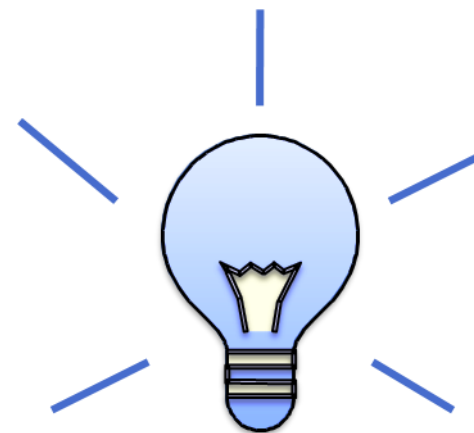
**Bowman Road
Mount Pleasant**

NEPA Update

Environmental Assessment (EA)



Planning & Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)

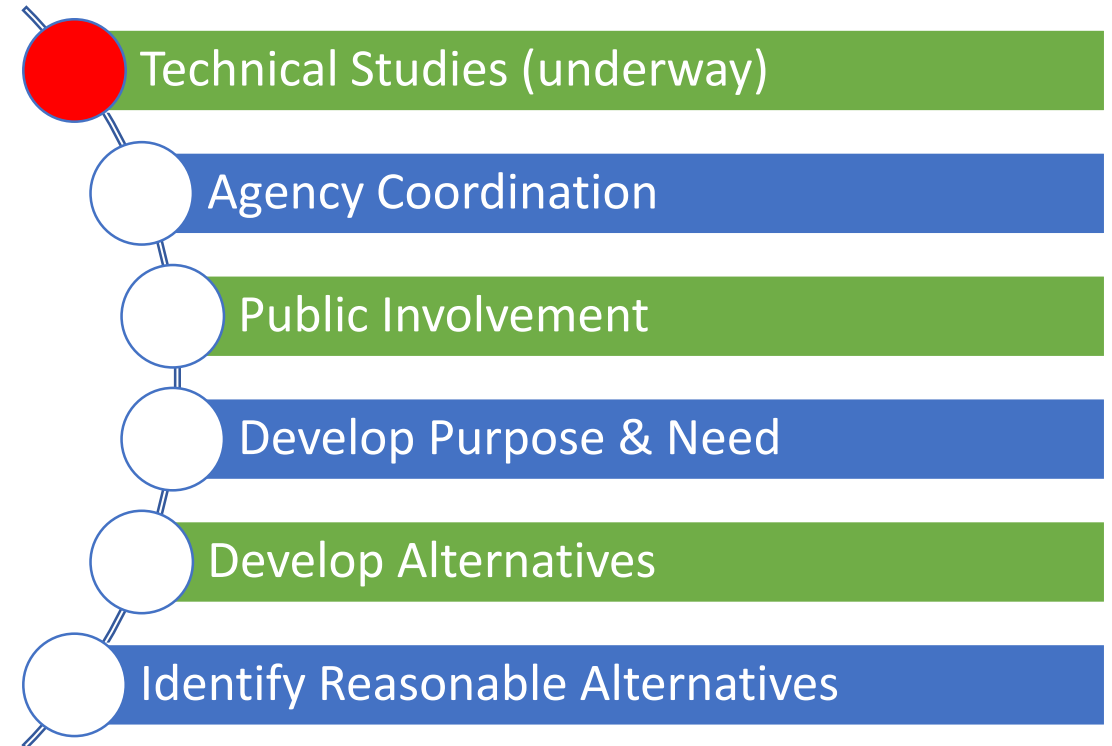


Planning & Environment Linkages (PEL) Study

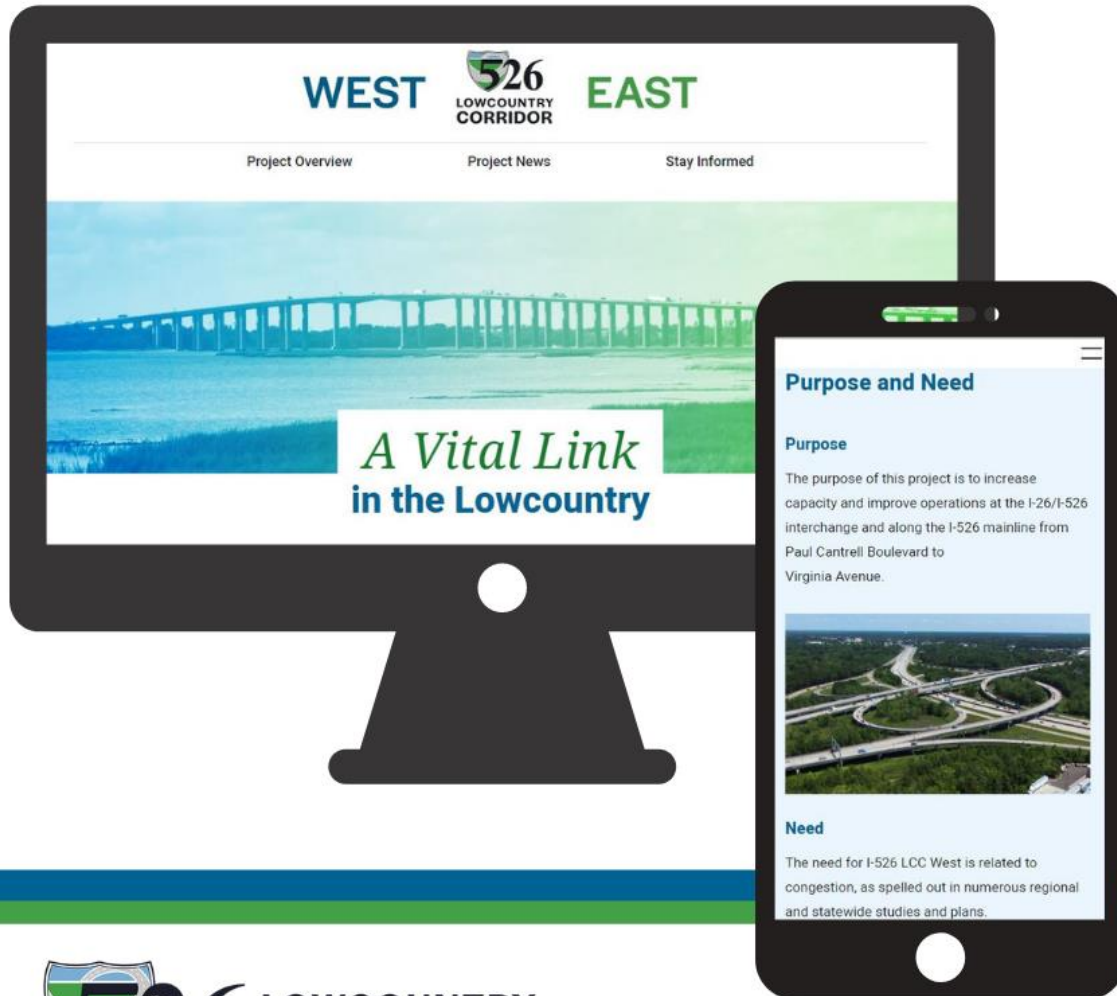
- Combines Planning, Engineering & NEPA
- Minimizes duplication of efforts
- Meaningful public engagement
- Reduces delays in project delivery

Initiate in **Summer 2019**

Draft PEL Study Document in **Summer 2021**



New Website, Branding, Tools



www.526LowcountryCorridor.org

- ✓ Both projects in one place
- ✓ Descriptions, timelines, FAQs, etc.
- ✓ New interactive resource maps and storyboards
- ✓ Educational Videos

A Combined Public Involvement Effort

We value your input!



**Public Information Meetings
Virtual Meetings**



526Corridor



@526Corridor

**Pop-up Community Meetings
Stakeholder Meetings**



www.526lowcountrycorridor.com



Newsletters

Questions & Suggestions

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