

MINUTES
GPATS STUDY TEAM COMMITTEE
September 22, 2025
Greenlink Operations Facility
205 Arcadia Drive, Greenville, SC 29609
10:00 a.m.

In-person and remote participation by Study Team members

MEMBERS PRESENT: Keith Brockington, Trey Brown, Draper Carlile, Jon Derby, William Flake, Hesha Gamble, Megan Groves, Valerie Holmes, Asangwua Ikein, James Keel, Jason Knudsen, Skip Limbaker, Clint Link, Heather Lollis, Katerina Moreland, Mark Pleasant, Anna Stewart, Jim Walden and Brandon Wilson.

OTHERS PRESENT: P. Butler, S. Davis, E. Dillon, T. Galloway, C. Hill and G. McMahon.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Keith Brockington, GPATS Transportation Manager, welcomed everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

GPATS PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Megan Groves, Program Manager with SCDOT, addressed members with status updates on projects within the GPATS area.

- Guideshare projects in construction were as follows:
 - Woodruff Road Congestion Relief - Right of Way acquisition is underway, approximately 87% complete with tentative let date in December 2026.
 - S-107 Butler Road – Duke utility agreement has been finalized and utility relocations to begin later this year. Tentative let date is spring 2026.
 - Garlington Road – Consultant selected is AECOM and negotiations are underway.
 - SC-183 & Jameson Road intersection – Preliminary design is underway with let date of August 2026.
 - Pelham Road & Haywood Road intersection and Pleasantburg Drive & Rutherford Road intersection – Funding for both intersections approved in STIP. PE to start in FY2026. These two intersections will be packaged together.
 - SC 183 Corridor Improvement – Contract for design services was executed August 2025. Preliminary design is underway. Currently analyzing viable typical sections and beginning traffic analysis.
- TA Programs were as follows:
 - Town of Central Connector – Right of way phase has begun. Finalizing construction plans and resolving QA comments. Tentative let date of February 2026.
 - Multi-use trail along Bryson Drive and Bryson Heights Drive (UGATA) – Preliminary design is underway. Current let date is February 2026.

- Federal Earmark project:
 - West Georgia Road – Signal rebuilds almost complete at both intersections. Waiting on Duke to install new electrical service meters for the new traffic signal cabinets. Construction remains on schedule with an expected completion date of October 31, 2025.
- Non-Guideshare project:
 - SC 183 Corridor Improvement – Pickens side of the project and is being developed with the Greenville County side that was mentioned earlier (under guideshare updates). Contract for design services was executed August 2025. Preliminary design is underway. Currently analyzing viable typical sections and beginning traffic analysis.
- SCDOT Bridges (non-guideshare) updates included:
 - US-29 Church Street – Currently in stage two of four of construction. Jacking the bridge and replacing the bearings of the bridge. Painting girders on span 13 and work has begun on substructures columns.
 - S-250 over Machine Creek – Final plans complete and utility and right of way certifications. Project is turned in for the November letting.
 - S-149 over Brushy Creek – Right of Way phase has begun and construction plans are being developed. Expected let date is June 2026.
 - US-276 over North Saluda River – Carolina TEA is the consultant that was selected and negotiations are underway.
 - S-277 over Twelve Mile Creek (Closed Bridge) – Preliminary design is underway with a current let date of FY2027.
 - S-507 over Langston Creek (Closed Bridge) – Parrish and Partners is the consultant that was selected and negotiations are underway.
 - S-115 over Middle Tyger River – Contract awarded to Reeves Construction Company and estimate completion is expected in September 2025.
 - S-80 over Reedy River – Contract awarded to Wright Brothers Construction Company, Inc. Construction to be completed by the end of the year.
 - S-147 over Reedy River – Contract awarded to Wright Brothers Construction Company, Inc. Construction to be completed in the spring of 2026.
- Design Build Bridge Package 16:
 - SC-183 over Gregory Creek
 - SC-183 over Twelve Mile Creek
 - SC-124 over George's Creek
 - SC-123 over George's Creek
 - All four bridges are replacements and contract awarded to Palmetto Infrastructure, Inc. The two SC-183 bridges are anticipated to be complete by the end of the year, the last two bridges are expected to be complete by fall of 2026.
- Design Build Bridge Package 19:
 - S-40 over South Saluda River
 - S-102 over Armstrong Creek
 - S-310 over tributary to Richland Creek

- S-94 over tributary to Enoree River
- S-40 over Saluda Overflow
- S-26 over tributary to Saluda River
 - All six bridges are replacements and contract awarded to E. S. Wagner Company, LLC. Notice to proceed has been issued and contract is in design. Anticipating construction to begin summer 2026.
- Safety Improvements:
 - Gap Creek Road & Hampton Road Intersection Improvements – Final plans complete and preparing for letting in October 2025.
 - US-25 & US-25 Connector Intersection Improvements – Project awarded to Palmetto Corporation of Conway with a completion date of June 2026. Contractor expected to begin work in November 2025.
 - SC-183 Safety Improvements – Project awarded to Palmetto Corporation of Conway with a completion date of August 2026. Contractor expected to begin work in December 2025.
 - US-29 Safety Improvements – Project let on August 12, 2025; award pending.
- Vulnerable Road Users (Section Corridor Improvements):
 - River Street/Richardson Street
 - US-29 Wade Hampton Boulevard
 - US-276 Poinsett Highway
 - Currently developing traffic reports. Once reports are completed, preliminary plans will be developed.

Ms. Groves made herself available for questions.

TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES (TPM), LRTP AND TIP AMENDMENTS

Anna Stewart, GPATS Transportation Planner, updated members on an amendment to the GPATS Horizon 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) of GPATS Performance Measures as required by the FAST Act. Ms. Stewart explained an amendment to the GPATS FY2025-2034 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Document is also needed to bridge TPMs from the LRTP into project selection and implementation. The Performance Measure item to be amended is the Safety Targets, which GPATS updates each September. Ms. Stewart showed a presentation explaining the amendment in more specific detail.

Ms. Stewart said, in reference to the Safety Targets, most of them did decrease; however, the two that increased were the Fatality Rate and the Non-Motorized Fatalities and Severe Injuries categories.

Ms. Stewart made herself available for questions.

Recommendation: Mr. Brockington asked for approval, or any objections, from the members to recommend an amendment to the Long-Range Transportation Plan to reflect updated Safety Targets, as presented, to the Policy Committee for their approval. No verbal objections or questions by consensus.

Recommendation: Mr. Brockington asked for approval, or any objections, from the members to recommend an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program Document to reflect updated Safety Targets, as presented, to the Policy Committee for their approval. No verbal objections or questions by consensus.

GPATS CARBON REDUCTION PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Stewart gave an update on GPATS Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) explaining GPATS Staff has been developing this program. She said the CRP was established by the IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) Bill and funds projects that will reduce transportation emissions. Ms. Stewart explained the funding is going to be primarily used for signal improvement priorities. GPATS Staff has met with SCDOT Districts 2 and 3, and the City of Greenville to discuss projects and came up with the following project list:

- US 25 Timing and Communication - District 3 (FY2023)
- Butler Road Timing and Communication – District 3 (FY2023)
- Expanded Traffic Signal Video Detection – City of Greenville (FY2023)
- SC 81 @ SC 153 – District 2 (FY2024)

Ms. Stewart pointed out that the last project (SC-81 @ S-153) was funded with fiscal year 2024 resources; however, some funds remain. Ms. Stewart presented a brief overview of termini and locations, after which she asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Clint Link, Director of Engineering Services for City of Greenville, asked about timing on a Call for Projects for the remaining amounts.

Mr. Brockington replied that it remains to be seen how SCDOT works with the flow through on this particular Program and getting the funds out. He said GPATS has all five years of the CRP funding available. Mr. Brockington further explained the first two years have been obligated, but the remaining funds for FY2024, as well as all of FY2025 and FY2026, are available. He added that GPATS will be working with SCDOT to get the funds programmed and updates will be shared with members.

GPATS FY2025-2034 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AC #7

Keith Brockington addressed members on the TIP Amendment AC#7 reminding them the financial statement is included in today's Agenda Packet.

The following changes are being made to the TIP:

- SC-183 Farris Bridge Road Project (Pickens County Side)
 - Funding SCTIB and Pickens County Local
 - PE: \$4 mil (FY2024)
 - ROW: \$6 mil (FY2027)
 - CON: \$57.2 mil (FY2029)
- Addition of Bridge Improvement Project - SC 86 over Saluda River
 - Amount provided by SCDOT
 - PE: \$500,000 (FY2026)
- Carbon Reduction Program FY2023 and a portion of FY2024 Projects - \$2.325 mil

- Addition of Intersection Improvement – Project Speedway Local Access Road
 - Amounts provided by SCDOT
 - PE: \$322,000 (FY2026)
 - ROW: \$3 mil (FY2026)
 - CON: \$7.3 mil ARC funds and \$805,563 Local (FY2027)
- Butler Road Update CON - \$14.5 mil (FY2027 & FY2028)

Mr. Brockington explained on the Butler Road update, the \$14.5 million dollars are Advanced Construction Conversion (ACC) funds which are funds that will be spent by GPATS in future years reducing Guideshare but they are actually obligated in FY2026.

Mr. Brockington stated this TIP Amendment will be advertised through October 27th (GPATS next Policy Committee Meeting) and asked anyone with comments or requested changes to alert the Staff as soon as possible.

Mr. Brockington made himself available for any questions.

Recommendation: Mr. Brockington asked for approval, or any objections, from the members to pass the Transportation Improvement Program amendment AC#7 recommendation to the Policy Committee for their approval. No verbal objections or questions by consensus.

GPATS 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Brockington presented the proposed meeting dates for the calendar year 2026 as follows:

<u>Study Team</u>	<u>Policy Committee:</u>
January 26	February 23
April 13	May 11
July 13	August 10
September 14	October 12

Mr. Brockington reminded everyone that once the Policy Committee has approved next year's meeting dates, they will be posted on the www.gpats.org website both on the calendar and the homepage.

Mr. Brockington asked for comments or questions from the members.

Recommendation: Mr. Brockington asked for approval, or any objections, from the members to pass the proposed meeting schedule for calendar year 2026, as presented, for recommendation to the Policy Committee for their approval. No verbal objections or questions by consensus.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Brockington updated members on the FTA Section 5310 application by Able SC stating the applicant will attend the Policy Committee meeting next month. He reminded members the Policy Committee held the application on August 25th awaiting more detailed information before voting.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Brockington said GPATS Horizon 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Request for Proposal (RFP) has been submitted and should be live today with an ending date of October 16.

Clint Link asked if this had a timeline.

Mr. Brockington answered yes, it needs to be completed by the end of 2026. He clarified that based on GPATS federal schedule, it isn't required until the end of 2027, however, the hope is to get the entire upstate on the same LRTP schedule and SPATS (Spartanburg Area Transportation Study), ACATS (Anderson-Clemson Area Transportation Study), and ACOG (Appalachian Council of Governments) will have theirs completed at the end of 2026.

Mr. Brockington informed members that the GPATS election of Chairman and possibly Vice-Chairman is scheduled for February 2026. GPATS By Laws mandate that the two positions must be chosen every two years. Typically, both positions are elected at the same time; however, the GPATS Vice-Chair position was vacated in 2025, and thus the election took place in February of this year. It will be left up to the Policy Committee to decide whether to vote on both positions in 2026 or just the Chairman.

Mr. Brockington asked if anyone had any other new business for the Study Team. Hearing none, Mr. Brockington introduced Mark Pleasant from the Federal Highway Administration, who will be speaking on the following agenda item.

GPATS Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Session

Mark Pleasant, USDOT Federal Highway Administration Community Planner, addressed members in regards to the TMA Certification process.

Mr. Pleasant began by saying Keith Brockington has undoubtedly set a record in the state of South Carolina since this is his sixth certification since joining GPATS.

Mr. Pleasant invited all to stay throughout the process, but acknowledged that many will be unable to stay, as it is an all-day event. With that in mind, Mr. Pleasant stated this is a great opportunity to have an informal conversation with those in attendance and get some feedback on their thoughts and perspectives related to GPATS.

Mr. Pleasant suggested that anyone interested in the federal language and specific reasons why the Study Team and Policy Committee meet regularly should read the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 450.300. He stated the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) structure is not unique to South Carolina; it is present in every state in the country and has been in existence since the 1960s.

Mr. Pleasant explained every four years, FTA and FHWA jointly review the metropolitan transportation planning process for those areas with over 200,000 population and part of the review includes seeking public input. He summed up the TMA Certification as intending on certifying the MPO is doing their job, essentially. It is not an effort to find shortcomings in processes but to hold up good processes and share that throughout the country.

Mr. Pleasant asked for a show of hands for those representing federal agencies, state agencies, county, city, bike and pedestrian communities, schools, and transit, highlighting the diversity of the attendees. He then asked for words that come to mind when you think of GPATS and some of their strengths. Some of the strengths mentioned included cross-jurisdictional awareness and support, institutional knowledge among staff and Study Team and Policy Committee members, as well as the accessibility and prompt response of the staff.

When asked their thoughts on success stories of GPATS, members mentioned the interactability of the different entities that work with GPATS, using the Woodruff Road Congestion Relief project as an example and the effort put forth in organizing the project and working with other jurisdictions and agencies involved.

The next question, regarding hindrances or challenges, elicited comments related to the rapid growth in the Upstate, and the complexity of planning due to the progressively increasing population. Additionally, the general public is frustrated by projects that take too long to be completed and/or focus on areas they believe require more attention. Another member commended GPATS for advocating for a variety of transportation modes while clearly communicating and providing access to training. Another expressed appreciation for the GPATS 101 Training Sessions and webinar invitations GPATS sends out regularly, which help keep them updated throughout the year.

Members were asked to share their thoughts on the change in GPATS boundary lines due to the 2020 Census. Mr. Brockington mentioned Heather Lollis, Grants & Regulatory Compliance Specialist with Greenlink, would have a good perspective on that, as she worked for Clemson Area Transit (CATbus) when it was in GPATS boundary and now works with Greenlink/GTA, and the new boundary excludes CATbus. Ms. Lollis stated the new line makes more sense and aligns better with the priorities of the organizations involved. She added that with CATbus now working with Anderson-Clemson Area Transportation Study (ACATS), it just makes more sense due to the proximity of Anderson to Clemson. Additionally, GPATS was very helpful in the transition CATbus had to make, as they were readily available to answer questions and assist with lingering projects and funding.

The last discussion topic related to GPATS overall communications. Members stated the email updates and the website (www.gpats.org) were both appreciated and a good tool for staying informed.

Mr. Brockington acknowledged there are always ways to expand communications and welcomed any suggestions members would like to offer for improvement.

Mr. Pleasant then asked if anyone had questions for him.

Someone asked how the information on GPATS compares to other MPOs, specifically the processes of the Study Team.

Mr. Pleasant replied that there are some similarities with meeting schedules and frequency. GPATS is on a larger scale when compared to other MPOs, and the Study Team appears to have good participation and attendance. He stated the engagement and interest of members seems really good, and that is an integral part of the process. From the modal perspective, he believes GPATS considers multiple modes of transportation. The school district's engagement is also essential.

Lastly, Mr. Pleasant thanked all for their attendance and extended the invitation to stay throughout the day. He briefly explained the remaining portions of the recertification process, stating there is a required public comment aspect, a 30-day public comment period, the report will be finalized within 60 days, shared with members, and finally, a certification will be issued, valid for four more years.

Mr. Brockington asked if anyone had any more questions or comments.

ADJOURN

Without objection, Mr. Brockington adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cleo A. Hill". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Recording Secretary
Cleo A. Hill