

**Walterboro City Council  
Work Session  
I-95 Business Loop Project  
December 16, 2015  
4:00 P.M.**

**Present were:**

Mayor Bill Young, Council Members Jimmy Syfrett, Paul Siegel, Tom Lohr, Bobby Bonds, James Broderick and Judy Bridge, City Manager Jeff Molinari and City Clerk Betty Hudson. There were 7 persons present in the audience. Attorney George Cone arrived late to the meeting.

**Others Present:**

Mr. Mark Baker, President of Wood + Partners, and Mr. Charlie Johnson, Project Manager from Wood + Partners.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive an update presentation by Charlie Johnson and Mark Baker of Wood + Partners on the I-95 Business Loop Streetscape Corridor Project.

Mayor Young called the meeting to order and called on Council Member Syfrett for the invocation. Mayor Young led the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

Mr. Molinari then introduced Mark Baker and Charlie Johnson from Wood + Partners. He explained that tonight's presentation was on the Business Loop Project. As you are aware, we received a little over \$6.6 million for the Loop Project through the Capital Projects Sales Tax. I have posed the question to Mark Baker and Charlie Johnson on how to best utilize the remaining funds from the Capital Project Sales Tax. Mark wanted to look at how best can we utilize these dollars. How best can we stretch these funds. Mark Baker and Charlie Johnson are going to go through where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. I think it would be a very informative presentation and Work Session. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Mark Baker. A copy of a booklet entitled "City of Walterboro - I-95 Business Loop Streetscape Corridor, Phase 2 Design Development" was distributed to all Council Members at the beginning of the meeting.

Mr. Baker thanked Council for the opportunity to appear before them with a presentation on this project. He said, what an exciting project this has been. It's been a really fun journey, going through each phase. We started with this project in the downtown area on Washington Street. He said that it has been a real joy to see Walterboro go through this revitalization. We thank you for letting us assist you in the project.

Mr. Baker explained to Council that Wood+ Partners is an urban planning firm. We work from Virginia to Louisiana. The economy is doing well and we do have quite a few clients across a broad area. We do specialize in urban planning with streetscapes and downtowns. I think a great opportunity on this project is that we can capture tourists and visitors as they are traveling down the I-95 corridor to exit 53 and say there is something downtown you need to see. This includes all the things we are talking about which are the street trees, the sidewalks, the lights, the banners and the signage. Those things begin to tell the motorists there is something to see downtown, you need to go there and shop and visit.

Mr. Baker then introduced Mr. Charlie Johnson, who used an overhead computer display for his presentation. Mr. Baker said that Mr. Johnson will take you through the summary of the construction costs - how we can use the current funding. Charlie is going to walk you through the phases that are under construction now, then we will talk about Phase 2. Phase 1C and B, we will share with you the information on those phases. Then, we will talk about Phase 2 of the future phase.

Mr. Charlie Johnson stated that he works with Mark Baker, and I work in the Tallahassee Florida office.

Mr. Johnson then gave a lengthy presentation of the construction phases and proposed planning phases of the I-95 Business Loop Project. Council Member Bridge raised a concern on the

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trees that would be planted along the Corridor. She said one of my issues is we are putting a lot of lighting and we want to keep the lighting as visible. So, the bigger trees should not cut out the visibility.

Mr. Baker pointed out that one of the things we are talking to Jeff about is to have the City come back in between these existing gooseneck lights which are up on the utility poles, and put in ornamental lights instead. You could purchase these instead of contracting with the power companies. The ornamental lights might also have banners on the posts too. So, there is a combination of things that the motorists might see to draw them into downtown. It's the light fixtures, the sidewalks, the trees and the banners, all of that together. So, we think it would be good to add ornamental lights in here and that's something you might contract with local suppliers to do and we will provide some information to Jeff on that as well.

Mr. Baker noted that one of the things we have discovered is through the first phase is that you might be better off purchasing those ornamental lights.

More discussion was held on street lighting, tree plantings and signage.

Mr. Johnson then briefly described the funding available for this program. He stated that this just shows the breakouts to make it a bit more clear.

Summary Sheet - I-95 Business Loop Streetscape Corridor

Non Sales Tax Funding Available (Outside of the Sales Tax) :

CDBG Funds	\$500,000 (Phase 1C & 1D only)
TE Funds	\$400,000 (Phase 1B only)
CTC Funds	<u>\$100,000</u>
Total Non Sales Tax Funds	\$1,000,000

Sales Tax Funds Available: \$6,646,947

Total Funds Available: \$7,646,947

Funds Obligated:

Phase 1C & 1D Construction:	\$1,443,607
Phase 1C & 1D Construction Management:	\$136,850

Total Funds Available: \$6,066,490

Total Funds Remaining for Phase 1B & 2: \$6,019,543

Phase 2 Funded by Sales Tax

Segment 1:	\$1,426,355
Segment 2:	\$ 236,750
Segment 3:	\$ 896,191
Segment 4:	\$ 679,507
Segment 5:	\$ 181,906
Phase 1B:	\$1,223,762
Segment 6:	<u>\$ 910,165</u>
Total Cost	<u>\$5,554,636</u>
Total Funds Remaining	<u>\$6,066,490</u>
Sales Tax Funds Remaining:	\$ 511,854
Estimated Cost of Bells Hwy. to Exit 57: +/-	\$1,800,000

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Mr. Johnson gave the following estimates for additional services:

1. Additional Sidewalk  
Consultant Fees and Construction Estimate \$781,500
2. Additional Boardwalk  
Consultant Fees and Construction Estimate \$484,000
3. Easement/Row Acquisition  
Title Search & Negotiations: \$475,000 - \$510,000 (+/- 150 properties)
4. Eddie Chasteen Road Drainage/Civil Support  
Civil, surveying, permitting & landscape arch. services: \$45,000
5. Ireland Creek Bridge Structural Support  
Civil, surveying, permitting & structural eng. services: \$26,000  
Title Search & Negotiations \$245,000 - \$270,000 (+/- 80 properties)

With regard to the acquisition of the easements from property owners, Mr. Johnson said there is a lot of flexibility in how you might want to do this. Maybe you have somebody in-house who could go and work the negotiations with the title search. Mr. Mark Baker added, what we would do is we would hire a real estate attorney to do the title search for us, and once you have documented the existing provisions and you have conceptual ideas on what you are going to do, then sit down with these property owners, so there will be a one-on-one negotiation, and say we would like to improve the highway in front of your property and it's going to add value there. There are going to be trees put in and a side walk, would you be willing to grant us an easement for that property. Once that's done, you actually prepare the easement and do a plat. Now, you may have a real estate attorney in town that does your title search. You may have a local realtor or somebody who knows most the property owners, to go and sit down with the property owners one on one.

Council Member Syfrett asked is there any kind of a cost summary estimate on what we would need to have to help Adam to predict what he would need to add to his staff and budget once all this stuff is in place.

Mayor Young commented that he thinks the project looks great. He said, I know we have some decisions to make, but I think it looks great. I think it's going to make a huge difference in the way people view Walterboro. It benefits downtown, but it also benefits all of our other businesses in the area. All of our business areas that are off the interstate would benefit from this.

City Manager Molinari then asked Mr. Baker, what would you like from us, this is a lot of information for us to digest and obviously we are moving, we have phase 1B that's going to happen, but as far as in spending the rest of those Sales Tax dollars, when do you need a clear direction from the City, because we have some different things that we need to look at.

Mr. Baker responded, I would say that right now if you are comfortable with the strategy of continuing with segments 1 thru 6, we are heading toward moving forward. We want to move forward with segments 1 to 6. That's about \$500,000 below the budget. So, we would like to move forward with that. We need to know pretty quickly if there are going to be any easements. The easements are our first concern if you are going to want to do sidewalks. At least get the easements for them, because a lot of the plantings require an easement. So, if we don't get the easements, then we don't put the trees in. If you all are in agreement that segments 1 through 6 is the way you want to spend this next chunk of funds, then we will continue with that. Then the question is on the title search. Mayor Young commented that the segment items 1 through 6 is what Council had presented

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for the Capital Projects Sales Tax.

Further discussion was held on the subject of the costs for the sidewalks and the acquisition of the easements.

City Manager Molinari stated that what I need to know is whether or not City Council wants sidewalks, and if you do, then staff will pursue that route.

Mayor Young then said, I assume that we want to do segments 1 through 6 since that's what we presented to the public when we did the Capital Sales Tax Project. Mayor Young also commented that the sidewalks would be something we may want to do later.

More discussion was held on acquiring the easements.

Mr. Baker then stated, to finish this, the construction drawings, we need to know if the easements are going to be in, because we are designing all these sections with the sidewalks in. You know DOT has very strict guidelines on the distance a tree can be placed from the curb. So, the only way you can get street trees in the southern section out here is to go out of the right-of-way. It is going to enhance their value to have the sidewalks.

Mayor Young then asked Mr. Baker if he was correct in stating that the good news is that almost everything as far as the road improvements and all of that are inside the right of way. The only thing we are really going outside the right of way for is trees and some sidewalks in some places. So, we didn't have to ask anybody to give up any property or anything to do the rest of it. It could have been a lot more extensive, and it's not going to be that bad.

The presentation was concluded, and Mayor Young thanked Wood + Partners for a great presentation. He said, I know it helped me to understand more of where we are, and Council appreciates it.

City Manager Molinari announced that he had received confirmation to use the Wampee Conference for City Council's retreat at the end of January. He said, I will be sending out information on this soon. He also stated, you have in front of you a copy of the Annual Report for the City of Walterboro. This report was put together by Michelle Strickland, Tourism Director, who did an excellent job with the help of all the department managers.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Council Member Broderick, seconded by Council Member Bonds and passed with all members voting in favor. The meeting concluded at approximately 5:36 P.M. Notice of this meeting was distributed to all local media, including the City's website and posted on the City Hall bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to meeting time.

Submitted by,

Betty J. Hudson  
City Clerk

**APPROVED: February 9, 2016**