

The 2026 Transportation Sales Tax Referendum



A Strategic Blueprint for
Beaufort County's Future



BEAUFORT COUNTY **PENNY**

beaufortcountypenny.com

WHAT VOTERS WILL DECIDE

Beaufort County voters will consider a proposed Sales and Use Tax referendum. The Board of Voter Registration and Elections will conduct the referendum and publish the required ballot and election notices.



NOV. 3, 2026



POLLS OPEN 7 A.M. – 7 P.M.

QUESTION 1

**1% SALES & USE TAX
UP TO 9 YEARS OR UNTIL \$780 MILLION IS
COLLECTED — WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST.**

**FUNDS WOULD SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION
PROJECTS ACROSS THREE CATEGORIES:**

Project Category	Funding
Intersection + Safety Projects	\$326M
Widening Projects	\$205M
Resurfacing + Dirt Road Paving	\$249M
TOTAL	\$780M

QUESTION 2

**GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS
UP TO \$450 MILLION**

**VOTERS WILL ALSO DECIDE WHETHER
BEAUFORT COUNTY MAY ISSUE GENERAL
OBLIGATION BONDS:**

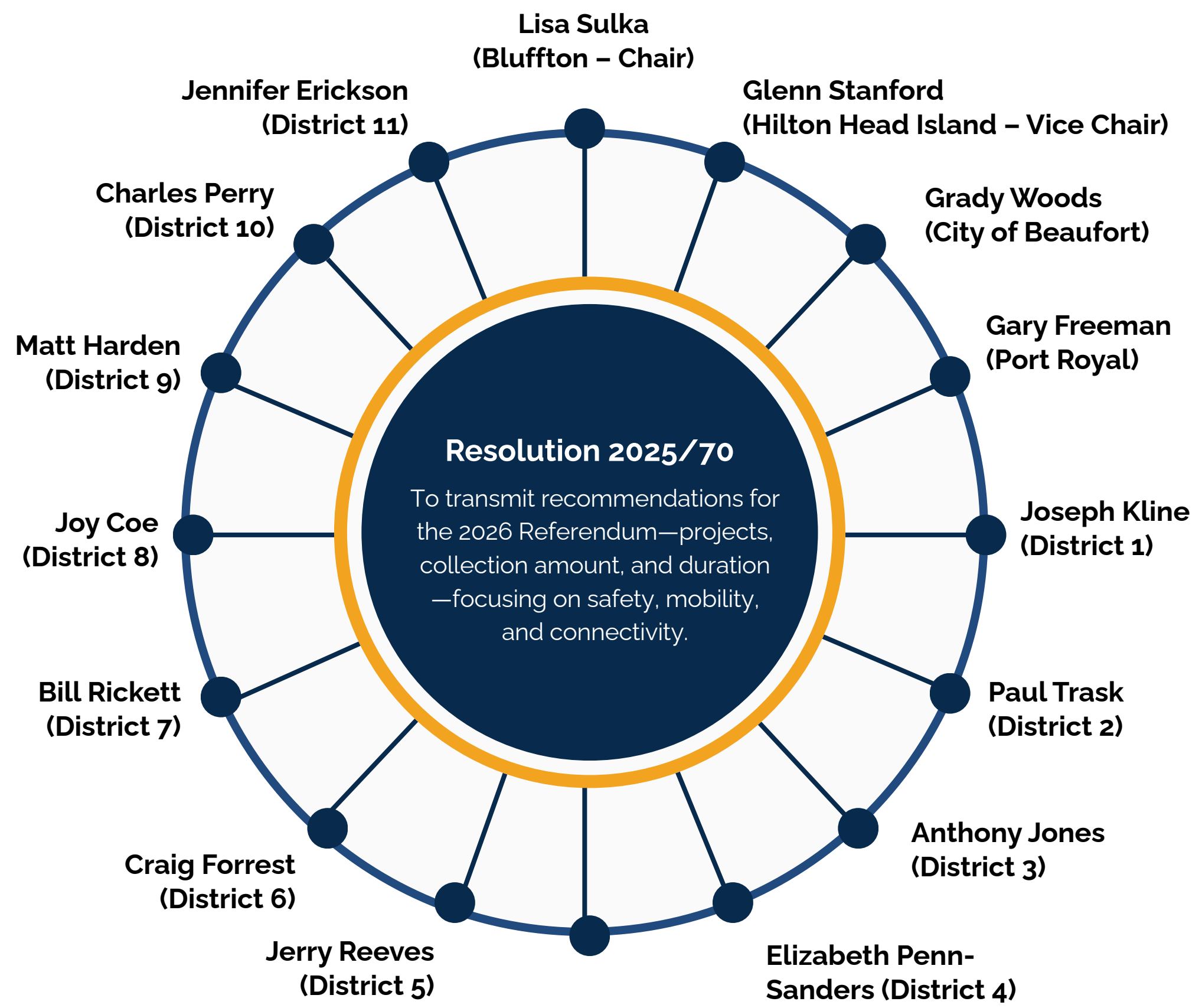
- **Maturing over no more than 9 years**
- **Payable from the proposed sales and use tax**
- **Used to help complete projects within the categories identified in Question 1**



Voters will vote YES or NO on each question.



THE CHARGE & THE COMMITTEE



MEETING DATES

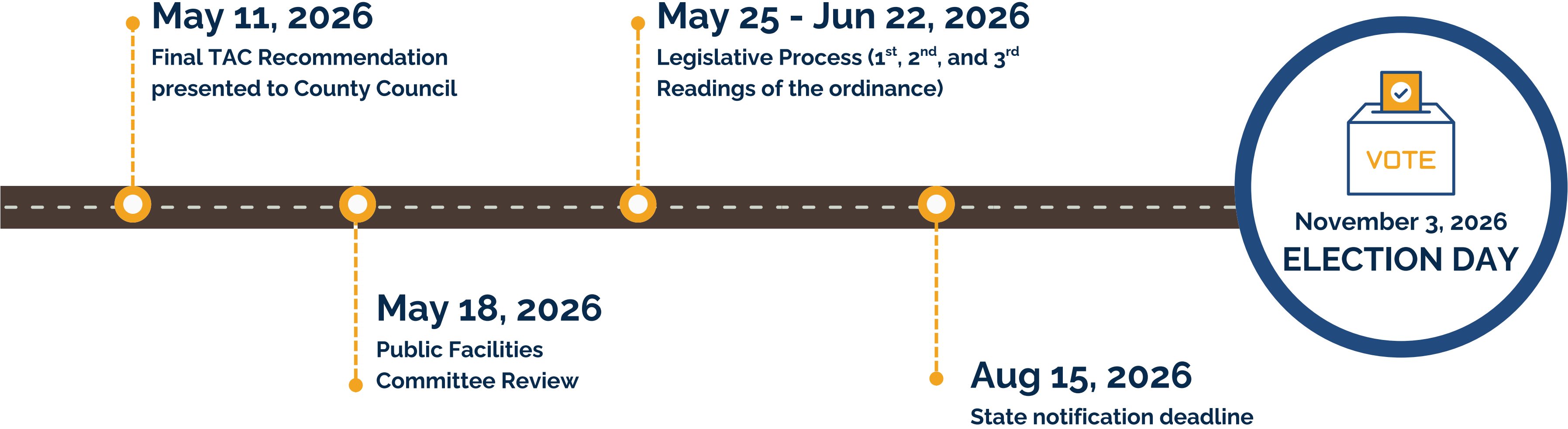
MEETING	DATE	TIME
Working meeting – LATS/County Discussion	Feb. 18, 2026	1:00–3:00 PM
TAC municipal – Port Royal (Location TBD)	Feb. 25, 2026	1:00–3:00 PM
TAC municipal – Bluffton (The Barn)	Mar. 4, 2026	1:00–3:00 PM
TAC municipal – HHI – Town Hall	Mar. 11, 2026	1:00–3:00 PM
TAC municipal – Beaufort – City Hall	Mar. 18, 2026	1:00–3:00 PM
Working community meeting (Location South)	Apr. 1, 2026	5:30–7:30 PM
Working community meeting (Location North)	Apr. 22, 2026	5:30–7:30 PM
Working meeting	May 6, 2026	1:00–3:00 PM
Final recommendations to Council	May 11, 2026	—

***All meetings are working meetings with public comments at each meeting**



BEYOND COMMITTEE'S WORK

THE ROAD TO THE REFERENDUM



Note: The TAC held 8 working public meetings between Feb - May 2026 to ensure ultimate community transparency



HISTORY OF THE PENNY

INFRASTRUCTURE THAT GUIDES BEAUFORT COUNTY FORWARD

Since 1998, Beaufort County voters have approved 3 Transportation Sales Tax Referendums that have invested over \$300 million into our community's infrastructure. Projects have included:

- Widening of SC 170 to four lanes across 13 miles
- New River crossings to improve evacuation and safety
- New US 278 eastbound Hilton Head Bridge with access to Pinckney Island
- Expansion of Bluffton Parkway
- Improvements to US 278 and US 17 corridors
- Lady's Island traffic upgrades
- Sidewalk and multi-use pathway investments



LEARN MORE AT
BEAUFORTCOUNTYPENNY.COM



TIMELINE OF PAST REFERENDA



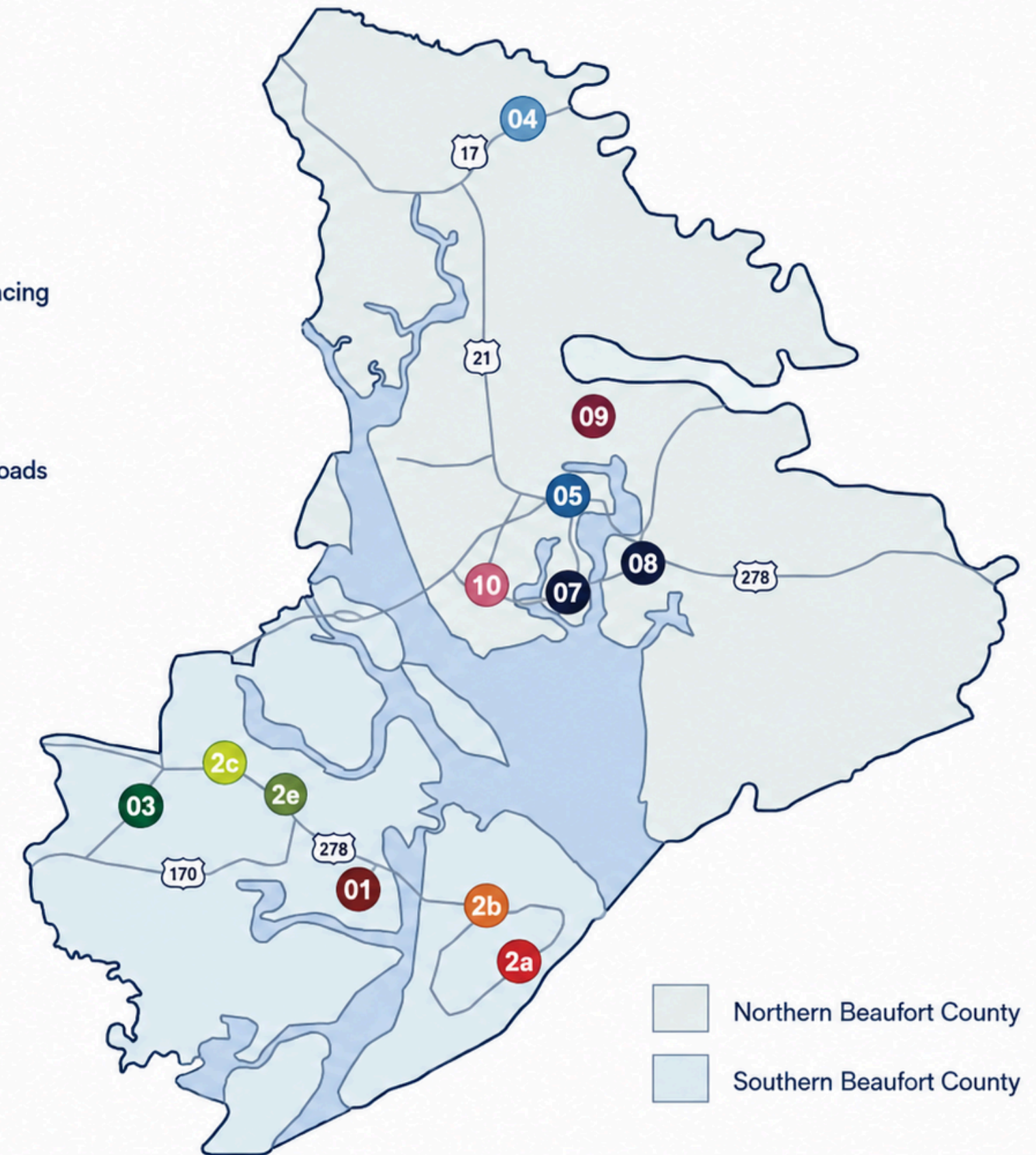
Key Message: For over 25 years, when Beaufort passes a penny, Beaufort delivers. It has served as the primary engine for county-wide growth and mobility.



2006 PENNY

PROJECT LOCATIONS

- 01 – Bluffton Parkway
- 2a – US 278 (William Hilton Parkway) Resurfacing
- 2b – US 278 Intersection Realignment
- 2c – US 278 (Fording Island Road) Widening
- 2d – US 278 (Fording Island Road) Frontage Roads
- 2e – US 278 Street Lighting at Traffic Signals
- 03 – SC 170 (Okatie Highway) Widening
- 04 – US 17 (Charleston Highway) Widening
- 05 – US 21 (Boundary St.) Improvements
- 06 – US 21 (Boundary St.) Parallel Road
- 07 – SC 802 (Ribaut Road) Intersection Improvements
- 08 – SC 802/ US 21 (Lady's Island Drive) Widening
- 09 – Northern Beaufort Bypass
- 10 – SC 802 (Savannah Highway) Widening



STATUS CHECK: FULFILLING THE 2018 MANDATE



100% Completion Goal by 2028

For all scheduled projects (exception: US 278 Corridor, scheduled start 2028, completion 2031).



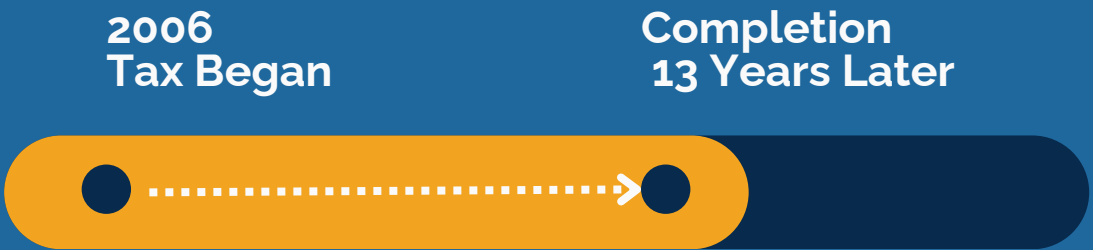
ROW by 2026

All remaining projects will enter Right of Way acquisition by the end of 2026.

The Reality of Infrastructure Timelines

Projects require design, state/federal permitting, and utility coordination.

Collection is fast; implementation is methodical.



Historical Proof: The successful Boundary Street project took 13 years after the 2006 tax began to fully complete.



PROJECT'S SCHEDULE

Lady's Island Corridor Traffic Improvements

Note: Nine projects are included in this category. Airport Frontage Road is being designed and constructed in two phases.

Project Name: Description	Project Cost*	Project Status	Design (start)	R/W Acquisition (start)	Construction (start - end)
COMPLETED					
Airport Frontage Road — Phase 1: New access road from Lost Island Road to Sea Island Parkway	\$3,061,150	Completed	Summer 2020	Completed	December 2022 –July 2024
SC 802 Right-Turn Lane New right-turn lane at the intersection of Sam's Point Road (SC 802) and Sea Island Parkway (US 21 Bus/US 21)	\$789,949	Completed	July 2018 (1999 Impact Fees)	Completed	January 2021 –June 2021
Right of Way (R/W) Acquisition					
Lady's Island Middle School Access Road New road from the intersection of Sea Island Parkway/Gay Drive to the intersection of Robin Drive/Katy Circle. Close existing Cougar Drive at Sea Island Parkway.	\$9,500,000	R/W Acquisition Design (90%)	March 2021	3rd Qtr. 2024	2nd Qtr. 2026 –2nd Qtr. 2027
Airport Frontage Road — Phase 2: Relocated Little Creek Road Realignment of Little Creek Road to Lost Island Road	\$4,400,000	R/W Acquisition Design (95%)	March 2021	4th Qtr. 2024	Upon completion of R/W acquisition and permitting, the project will be placed on hold.
Hazel Farm Road/Gay Drive Streetscaping	\$10,200,000	R/W Acquisition Design (70%)	March 2021	1st Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2027–2nd Qtr. 2028



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Project Name: Description	Project Cost*	Project Status	Design (start)	R/W Acquisition (start)	Construction (start - end)
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Design

Sunset Boulevard/Miller Drive West Resurfacing and traffic calming	\$1,800,000	Design (90%)	March 2021	N/A	3rd Qtr. 2026 –4th Qtr. 2026
US 21/SC 802 Intersection Restriping, signal upgrades, addition of dual left-turn lanes on Sea Island Parkway, resurfacing, and median improvements	\$4,400,000	Design (10%)	March 2021	Coordinated with an SCDOT safety improvement project	To be determined
US 21 Widening Near Walmart Approximately 4,000 linear feet of widening eastbound to create four travel lanes through the US 21/Airport Frontage Road intersection	\$9,100,000	Design (65%)	March 2021	2nd Qtr. 2026	1st Qtr. 2027 –2nd Qtr. 2028

On Hold

Beaufort High School Realignment New access to Beaufort High School	\$8,000,000 (\$190,603.45 expended)	On hold	March 2021		
Mayfair Court Improvement of existing road and extension to William Street	\$800,000 (\$1,847.75 expended)	On hold	March 2021 (Survey Control only)		
Meadowbrook Drive New road from Dow Road to Tidewatch Professional Complex	\$1,000,000 (\$114,835.93 expended)	On hold	March 2021		



PROJECT'S SCHEDULE

Sidewalks/Multi-Use Pathways

Project Name: Description	Project Cost* (Grant Fund)	Project Status	Design (start)	R/W Acquisition (start)	Construction (start - end)
Completed					
Ribaut Road 5-foot sidewalk from Lenora Drive to the existing sidewalk near Rahn Lane	\$410,142.47	Complete	April 2021	2nd Qtr. 2021	February 2023 –July 2023
Bluffton Parkway 8-foot sidewalk from the existing sidewalk to the SC 46 roundabout	\$385,590.52	Complete	April 2021	1st Qtr. 2021	October 2023 –December 2023
Laurel Bay Road 10-foot multi-use path from the Laurel Bay Military Housing Complex to US 21 (Trask Parkway)	\$5,836,117.18 SCDVA Grant — \$3,392,328	Complete	December 2022	N/A	February 2024 –August 2025
Depot Road 10-foot multi-use path from the Spanish Moss Trail to Ribaut Road	\$800,000 CDBG — \$200,000	Complete	N/A; contract by others	2nd Qtr. 2023	October 2025 –February 2026
Construction					
Alljoy Road 6-foot sidewalk from Burnt Church Road to Thomas Lawton Drive	\$3,300,000 TAP — \$1,177,868.71	In progress	April 2021	N/A	4th Qtr. 2025 –2nd Qtr. 2026



PROJECT'S SCHEDULE

Sidewalks/Multi-Use Pathways

Project Name: Description	Project Cost* (Grant Fund)	Project Status	Design (start)	R/W Acquisition (start)	Construction (start - end)
Right-of-Way Acquisition					
Stuart Point Road 8-foot shared-use path from Delaney Circle to US 21	\$3,500,000 CDBG — \$200,000	Right-of-Way Acquisition; Design (100%)	April 2021	3rd Qtr. 2023	3rd Qtr. 2026 –1st Qtr. 2027
Big Estate Road 8-foot sidewalk from US Highway 17 to African Baptist Road	\$3,400,000	Right-of-Way Acquisition; Design (100%)	December 2022	2nd Qtr. 2025	3rd Qtr. 2026 –1st Qtr. 2027
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive 5-foot sidewalk from Sea Island Parkway to Jonathan Francis Senior Road, with a 10-foot boardwalk over the creek	\$2,850,000	Right-of-Way Acquisition; Design (70%)	February 2022	1st Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2027 –4th Qtr. 2027
Design					
Broad River Boulevard/Riley Road 5-foot sidewalk from the existing sidewalk on Broad River Boulevard, continuing on Riley Road for approximately 2,100 feet	\$1,500,000	Design (60%)	February 2023	2nd Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2027 –3rd Qtr. 2027
Broad River Drive 5-foot sidewalk from Shell Point Road to Lowcountry Montessori School	\$1,700,000	Design (60%)	May 2023	2nd Qtr. 2026	3rd Qtr. 2027 –4th Qtr. 2027
Salem Road 8-foot sidewalk from Robert Smalls Parkway to Old Salem Road	\$2,600,000	Design (65%)	May 2021	2nd Qtr. 2026	2nd Qtr. 2027 –4th Qtr. 2027
Burnt Church Road 6-foot sidewalk from Bridge Street/Alljoy Road to Bluffton Parkway	\$800,000	Design (40%)	September 2025	N/A	4th Qtr. 2026 –3rd Qtr. 2027



FUNDING SCENARIO COMPARISON



The Macro Constraint

SCDOT manages 41,000 miles of roadway—the 4th largest system in the nation.

While they manage \$6.7 billion in active construction and have repaved 1/4 of the system in 7 years, state priorities differ from local priorities.



The Acute Focus

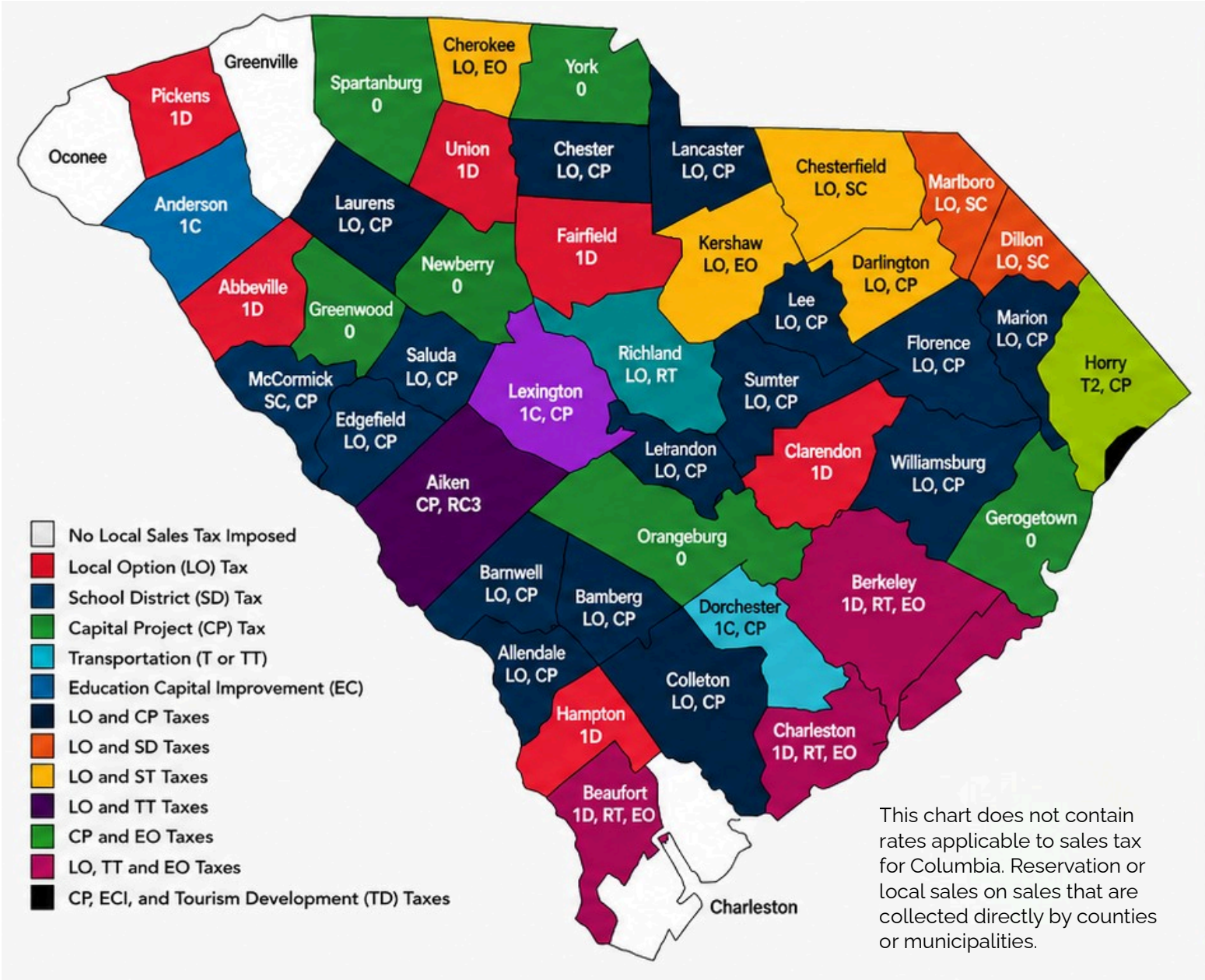
State funding alone will never close the \$1.47B gap.

The local option transportation sales tax is an option for Beaufort County to address traffic issues.



FUNDING SCENARIO COMPARISON

Without additional local funding, [#] of the [#] identified projects would not proceed.



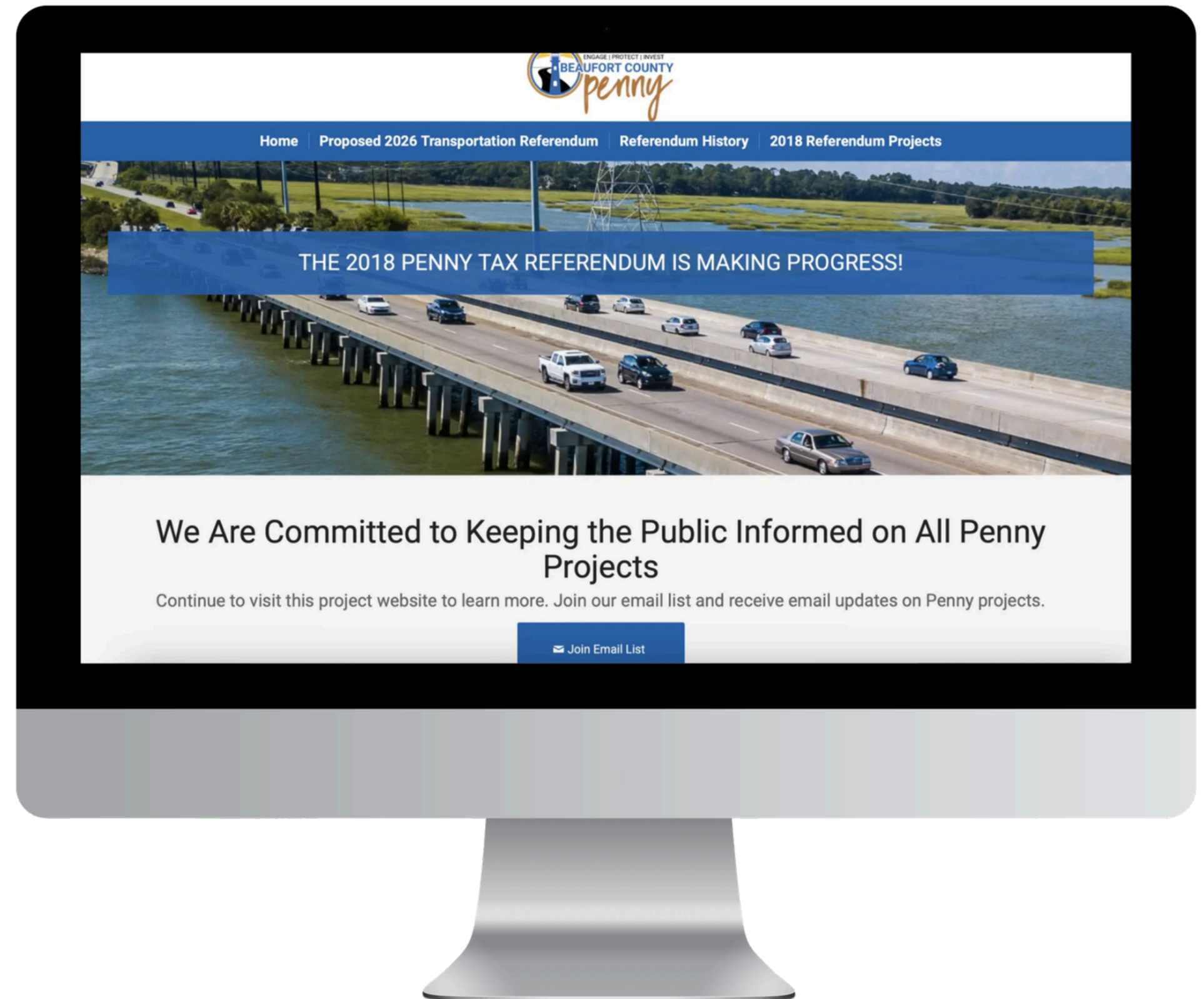
Beaufort County is one of only three counties in South Carolina operating without a transportation penny.

The Takeaway
We are competing for economic vitality and quality of life without utilizing the standard municipal funding engine that 43 other South Carolina counties rely upon.



WEBSITE

<https://beaufortcountypenny.com>



BEAUFORT COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PENNY

In May, Beaufort County Council voted to have a proposed 2026 Transportation Sales Tax referendum appear on the November ballot. Voters will decide whether to approve a new penny sales tax to fund critical infrastructure improvements that support safety, mobility, and connectivity. The referendum follows a months-long review by the 2026 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), whose recommendations were finalized through Council adoption of Ordinance 2026/30.



CRITERIA AND PARAMETERS

- Safety
- Evacuation Routes
- Hot Spots for accidents and congestion
- Transportation movement
- Council guidelines:
 - Widening
 - Resurfacing/Dirt Road Paving
 - Safety/Intersection improvements



THE 2026 PROGRAM: APPROACH & TAKEAWAY



The Approach

The TAC prioritized what is best for the entire area, not isolated districts. Needs were synthesized from comprehensive presentations by:

- Beaufort County School District & Sheriff's Office
- LATS (Lowcountry Area Transportation Study)
- Towns of Hilton Head, Bluffton, Port Royal, and the City of Beaufort

The Takeaway

The \$780M addresses capacity and connectivity across municipal, unincorporated, rural, suburban, and island communities.



THE EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION

The Philosophy

The TAC rejected the full \$1.47B list, instead doing the hard work of building a focused, understandable, and implementable program prioritized strictly on public safety, road capacity, and pavement condition.



The Unmanaged Need:
\$1.47 Billion

**8 Years.
\$780 Million.**



IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK: GOVERNANCE & TRANSPARENCY



Citizens' Oversight Committee

Establish a committee holding open, public meetings to monitor project progress and provide transparent financial tracking.



Municipal Project Management

Empower municipalities to manage their own jurisdiction projects via Intergovernmental Agreements (grantor/grantee relationship) to ensure local control and accountability.



Expedited Delivery via Bonding

Consider strategic bonding where financially prudent to lock in construction costs and accelerate delivery.



Preserving Flexibility

Maintain the ability to refine scopes, adjust estimates, and respond to changing ground conditions while strictly honoring the referendum's intent.



IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK: VALUE & DESIGN STANDARDS



Complete Streets Integration

Widening projects (e.g. SC 46, SC 170) must include pedestrian accommodations and multi-use pathways, aligning with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.



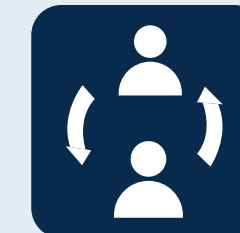
Aggressive Pursuit of Matching Funds

Actively leverage the local sales tax dollars to capture state and federal multipliers, maximizing the return on the local penny.



Enhanced Safety Striping

Mandate six-inch line striping on all sales tax-funded primary routes to dramatically improve visibility and safety.



Intergovernmental Coordination

Commit to seamless alignment with SCDOT, LATS, Jasper County, and municipal partners for regionally significant corridors.



THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE 2026 PROGRAM

\$780 MILLION PROGRAM

INTERSECTION & SAFETY

45 PROJECTS

Addressing hot spots for accidents, congestion, and evacuation routes.

RESURFACING

16 PROJECTS

Restoring pavement conditions on vital corridors.

DIRT ROAD PAVING

18 PROJECTS

Expanding rural and suburban connectivity.

ROAD WIDENING

4 PROJECTS

Unlocking capacity bottlenecks on major arteries.



SELECTED SAFETY AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS TO APPEAR ON BALLOT

\$326 MILLION

Project	Allocation	Supporting study
Ribaut Rd/Lady's Island Dr – Turn-Lane Construction	\$4,800,000	
Traffic Signal Improvements	\$19,075,000	
SC 170/US 278 Diverging Diamond Interchange	\$18,054,000	SC 170 Study
Squire Pope/William Hilton Pkwy Improvements	\$14,400,000	LATS 2045 LRTP Project (HHI-02)
Ribaut Rd Corridor Improvement (City of Beaufort)/SC 170/US 278 Diverging Diamond Interchange	\$28,370,000	
Lady's Island Dr/Meridian Rd Improvements	\$8,164,000	SC 170 Study
US 21 Improvements at Chowan Creek	\$3,850,000	
SC 170/SC 46 Intersection Conversion	\$10,237,000	SC 46 Study
SC 462 Realignment	\$19,760,000	
SC 170 Corridor Improvements N.O.B.	\$6,200,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Spanish Wells/William Hilton Pkwy Improvements	\$39,700,000	
Savannah Hwy and SC 170 Improvements	\$1,020,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Warsaw Island Rd	\$4,550,000	Vulnerability Study—Phase 1
Bluffton Pkwy/SC 46 Roundabout Improvements	\$6,000,000	LCOG & LATS
B.E. Wheatley Dr/Robert Smalls Pkwy Signal–SC 462 Realignment	\$1,540,000	
US 278/Sun City Signal Improvements	\$2,623,000	US 278 Study
US 278 and Buck Island Rd	\$1,800,000	LRTP Project
Ribaut Rd/Depot Rd Intersection	\$3,750,000	
Gumtree Rd Improvements	\$15,600,000	
US 278 and Simmonsville Rd	\$2,220,000	LRTP Project
Bluffton Pkwy Improvements	\$7,130,000	Bluffton Pkwy Studies
Gateway to Port Royal (Ribaut Rd)	\$19,360,000	
Gibbet Rd Signal	\$4,075,000	SC 46 Study
Grober Hill Rd/Parris Island Gateway Intersection	\$1,190,000	



SAFETY AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS — CONTINUED

Project	Allocation	Supporting study
High-Visibility Crosswalks & RRFBs (Downtown Beaufort)	\$2,873,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Short's Landing Signal	\$1,320,000	Sam's Point Access Management
Sea Pines Circle	\$15,600,000	LATS 2045 LRTP Project (HHI-02)
Evans Way/SC 170 – Signalized RCI	\$7,878,000	SC 46 Study
RI/RO at Bluffton Pkwy/Goethe Rd	\$1,220,000	Bluffton Pkwy Studies
Median Closings on US 278	\$1,345,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Old Jericho Rd Bridge Replacement	\$1,710,000	
Goethe Rd Resurfacing/Traffic Calming	\$420,000	
Main Street Rd Improvements	\$9,500,000	
Grober Hill Rd Corridor Improvements	\$8,310,000	
William Hilton Pkwy–Chaplin Corridor	\$9,100,000	LATS 2045 LRTP Project (HHI-05)
Stardust Ln Signal	\$811,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Warsaw Island Rd	\$4,550,000	SC 46 Study
Buckwalter Pkwy (H.E. McCracken Circle Section)	\$4,340,000	
Joe Frazier Rd Roundabout	\$4,642,000	Joe Frazier Rd Study
Laurel Bay/ Joe Frazier Roundabout	\$5,326,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Laurel Bay/Bay Pines Roundabout	\$4,331,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Shanklin Rd RCI	\$690,000	US 21 Corridor Study
Roseida Rd RCI	\$850,000	US 21 Corridor Study
ITS Downtown Bridge Design/Construction	\$690,000	
Middle Rd/SC 802 Roundabout Improvements	\$1,860,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan
Guardrail on Middle Rd (Between Doe Rd and Buck Rd)	\$140,000	LCOG Safety Action Plan



SELECTED WIDENING
PROJECTS TO APPEAR
ON BALLOT

\$205 MILLION

Project	Allocation	Description	Supporting study
SC 170	\$103,840,000	From US 278 to SC 462	SC 170 Study
SC 46	\$44,170,000	From the SC 170 roundabout to the Jasper County line	SC 46 Study
US 278	\$51,984,000	From SC 170 to the Jasper County line	US 278 Study
Neil Rd Intersection Improvements	\$4,650,000	New signalized intersection at Neil Rd and Robert Smalls Pkwy	



SELECTED RESURFACING
AND DIRT ROAD PAVING
PROJECTS TO APPEAR ON
BALLOT

\$249 MILLION

Project	Allocation	Description
Dirt Road Paving	\$12,381,521	18 County dirt roads with available right-of-way. See attached.
Municipal Roads – City of Beaufort	\$6,721,000	City of Beaufort-owned paved streets. See attached.
Municipal Roads – Town of Port Royal	\$1,034,000	Town of Port Royal-owned paved streets. See attached.
Municipal Roads – Town of HHI	\$8,272,000	Town of HHI-owned paved streets. See attached.
Municipal Roads – Town of Bluffton	\$3,877,500	Town of Bluffton-owned paved streets. See attached.
Daufuskie Island Roads	\$7,619,437	5 County-owned paved roads on Daufuskie Island. See attached.
Trask Pkwy (US 17)	\$12,542,000	From the Jasper County line to US 21 at Garden’s Corner.
Trask Pkwy (US 21)	\$46,708,500	From US 17 at Garden's Corner to Wood's Memorial Bridge, Lady's Island Dr, and Ribaut Rd (Port Royal section).
Sea Island Pkwy (US 21)	\$11,700,000	From the Lady's Island Walmart area to the Harbor Island Bridge.
Sams Point Rd (SC 802)	\$5,319,300	From Sea Island Pkwy to the roundabout.
Parris Island Gateway (US 21)	\$12,292,500	Trask Pkwy to Bell Bridge.
Savannah Hwy (SC 128)	\$4,867,200	From SC 170 to Parris Island Gateway.
Robert Smalls Pkwy (SC 170)	\$42,073,200	From Boundary Street to SC 462 and from US 278 to SC 46 at the roundabout.
Buckwalter Pkwy	\$10,099,700	From US 278 to SC 46.
Bluffton Pkwy	\$14,661,600	From SC 170 to Buck Island Rd and from Red Cedar Rd to the US 278 flyover bridge.
Fording Island Rd (US 278)	\$27,096,400	From SC 170 to the Hilton Head Island bridge.
William Hilton Pkwy (US 278 Business)	\$21,294,000	From the Hilton Head Island bridge to Sea Pines Circle.



POTENTIAL 2026 SALES TAX PROJECT

Road Widening

4

Projects

Intersection & Safety

45

Projects

Resurfacing

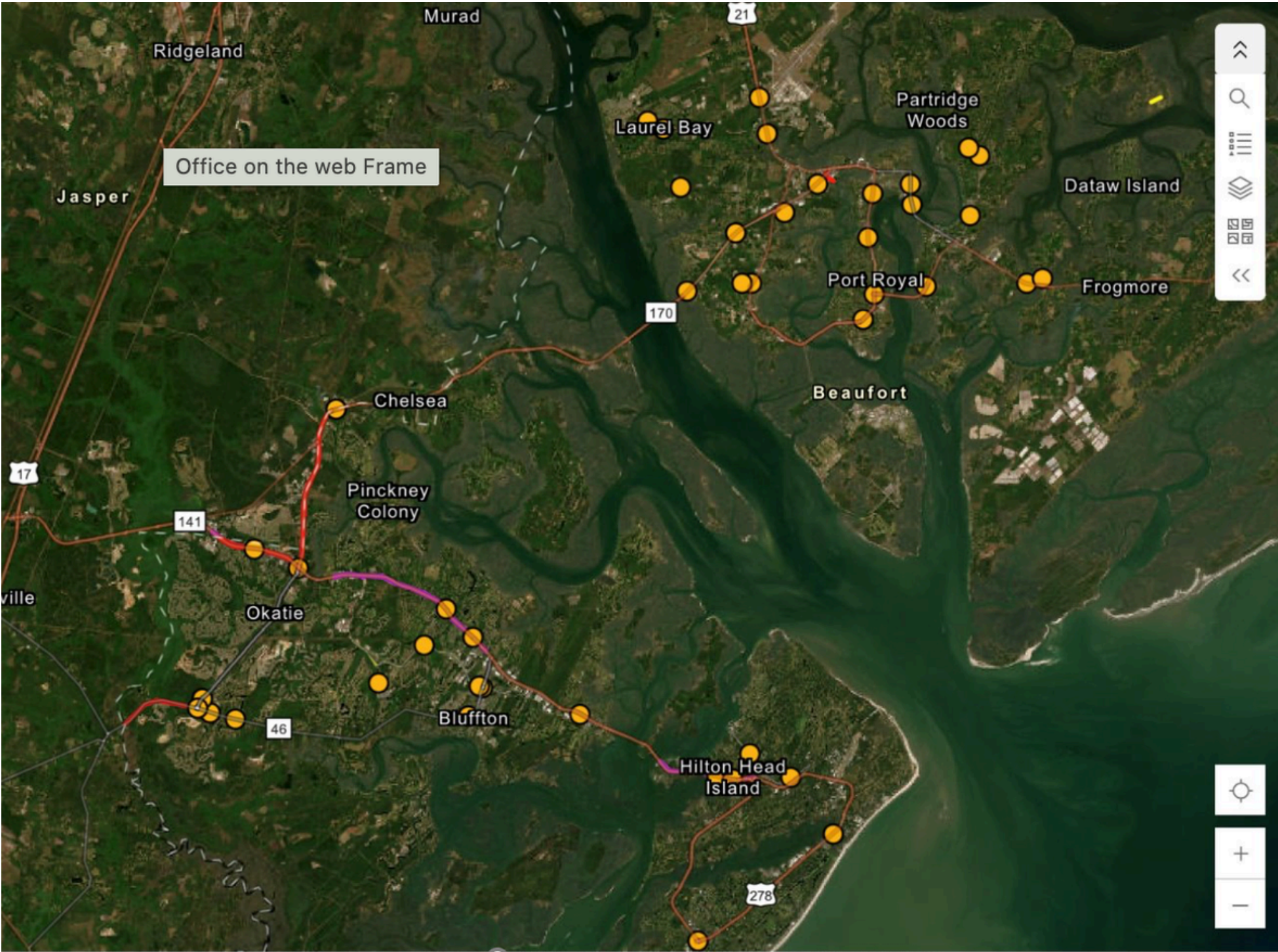
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Projects

Dirt Road

18

Paving Projects



THE CATALYST: UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH AND A \$1.47 BILLION BACKLOG

The Timeline

Over 20 years have passed since the last major transportation infrastructure initiative, while explosive population growth has strained capacity across the entire region.

The Demand

Over 150 identified projects totaling \$1.471 billion—and growing.

The Public Consensus

Surveys from the HH Area Realtors Association and the Town of Bluffton confirm transportation is the #1 issue for residents.



Questions?

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Beaufort County's Future



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