

March 11, 2015

Dear Governor Haley,

We are writing to you about a matter of great concern to many residents in and around the Town of Bluffton. Your speeches over the past few months regarding infrastructure and the need to maintain our roads, and your initiative to increase transparency in government, have encouraged us to write asking for your help.

For the past several years, the Town of Bluffton has been relentlessly trying to realign an existing 2 1/2 mile stretch of the Bluffton Parkway, which is in perfect condition and functioning well. When originally built the road was routed around several residential communities. The link with the Buckwalter Parkway was routed about one mile south of where the intersection would have been had the road been built in a straight line. While this is a Beaufort County road, the Town of Bluffton has been pushing strongly to have this 2.5 mile stretch of the road straightened at a cost between \$28-\$60 million (actual figure is unclear).

The proposed straightening of the road will bring it very close to several densely populated residential communities, including Rose Hill, The Townes at Buckwalter, Pinecrest, Woodbridge, and Traditions at Old Carolina. Negative impact to homeowners will include security, noise, and drainage issues, to say nothing of reduction in property values. The new road would also cross wetlands to be mitigated at taxpayer expense. The proposed route would go through and around undeveloped property owned by University

Investments, a John Reed corporation. According to Bluffton Mayor, Lisa Sulka, the right of way for the road would be donated by developer Reed, pending his approval of plans and routing.

Residents of these affected communities, and others, have appealed to both the Bluffton Town and Beaufort County Councils not to undertake this expensive and completely unnecessary project, to no avail. In response Mayor Sulka has stated the reasons for this initiative are:

1. A timesaver for commuters
2. An alternate evacuation route
3. Provide economic development in "targeted" areas

However, County traffic engineers conducted a study which concluded time saved would only be two minutes at most. Also, until such time as the Bluffton Parkway is extended to I-95 to the west, the Parkway will not be a viable evacuation route as it dead ends in a road with no westbound access (SC 170). Finally, the Town has not shared criteria used in determining how specific areas are "targeted" for economic development, and no cost/benefit analysis has ever been done for project 5B.

The Beaufort County Council states there is no money allocated to build this road. The Town of Bluffton is applying to the State Infrastructure Bank for funding the realignment, and has sent out an appeal to legislators, committees, businesses and certain individuals requesting they write to support the initiative. There is a huge disconnect here, since the County is saying nothing is going on and the Town is going full bore on the project. The Buckwalter Road intersection is already being marketed by University Investments . The listings

say "when the reconfigured Bluffton Parkway is completed, this site will be part of the best business location in the Buckwalter area". Apparently, the 5B project is regarded as a "done deal" by Mr. Reed and the Town of Bluffton, who are determined to build this road no matter what the cost. At this time of critical financial shortfall for roads, bridges and other much needed infrastructure projects, the realignment would be a travesty and misuse of taxpayer funds. A website with more information has been created.

<http://www.blufftonparkway.com/>

Please look into this situation put an end to this wasteful and unnecessary project once and for all. Your help and consideration of our request would be most appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Julie Moringello, 1 Fair Hope Lane, Bluffton
Fran and Suzie Richards, 58 Greenwood Drive, Bluffton
Craig and Linda Kodat, 5 Sweetgum Lane, Bluffton
Brian and Barbara Baxter, 40 Greenwood Drive, Bluffton
Eddie and Donna Ferguson, 54 Greenwood Drive,
Bluffton
Norm and Andrea Shotz, 8 Greenwood Drive