

# Questions asked, answered at CCR Phase II meeting

By Bob Kudelka

Dutch Square Mall was the place to be on an August evening for anyone looking for what comes next in the Carolina Crossroads I-20/26/126 Corridor Project.

Video screens, table-sized maps, extra-large photographs and helpful staffers from the Carolina Crossroads team helped answer questions from a sizeable crowd at the Phase 2 public information meeting on Aug. 30.

A Chapin woman smiled and breathed a sigh of relief after getting project information firsthand from SCDOT Construction Alternative Delivery Engineer **David Rister**.

“At least now I know what it’s going to look like,” the woman said. “Now, when I look at the map, I understand it better.”

Interest remains strong for one of the largest transportation projects in SCDOT’s history.

Designed to relieve a major pinch point in South Carolina’s Interstate Highway System, it includes widening 14 miles of interstate across portions of I-26, I-20, and I-126, with seven rebuilt interchanges and safer interchange entrance and exit points.

“It’s a great turnout tonight,” said SCDOT Project Manager **Brian Klauk**. “We are really thrilled that people are coming out to figure out how Phase 2 will improve their commute, their

travel and their business.

“They are also coming out just to see what will happen during construction of Phase 2 – how will their commute in the afternoon, or morning, change? They are asking good questions and absorbing the material and giving us some feedback, too. A lot of people watch our online meeting as well.”

The overall project is divided into five phases.

Phase 1 construction, which focuses on reconstructing the Colonial Life Boulevard interchange at I-126 and lengthening the I-26 eastbound exit ramp to U.S. 378, is on track for completion in 2024.

Phase 2 focuses on the re-

construction of the Broad River Road interchange at I-20. Phase 2 will also complete a portion of the I-20 widening and add a new ramp to improve access from I-20 westbound to I-26 westbound towards Irmo.

Phase 3 of the Carolina Crossroads Project is the largest and most extensive phase of the project. It includes the cloverleaf interchange connecting I-20 and I-26 in the area commonly known as “malfunction junction.” Procurement for a Design-Build Contractor for Phase 3 began in September 2022 and construction activity is anticipated to begin in 2024.

The \$2.08 billion project is a part of SCDOT’s Strategic 10-

Year Plan to bring our state’s infrastructure up to a state of good repair and modernize key portions of our interstates. The 10-Year Plan is funded with a combination of federal and state funds, including funds made possible by the 2017 state gas tax increase. The Carolina Crossroads project will be funded by 90 percent federal funds and 10 percent state funds.

All five phases of Carolina Crossroads are anticipated to be fully complete and open to traffic by the end of 2029.

“We all know fixing Malfunction Junction has been a priority,” Klauk said. “We can say goodbye to Malfunction Junction one day, and it’s going to be something we all can celebrate.”

