



CODY CROUCH/THE CONNECTOR

Carolina Crossroads is the name given to the project to reconfigure the intersection of Interstates 20, 26 and 126 in Columbia.

## Public gets involved in Carolina Crossroads Corridor Project

By Bob Kudelka

It's hard to watch TV these days without seeing advertisements touting the benefits of "On Demand" programming.

SCDOT engineers even used this concept to help the public learn more about a major highway improvement project, the Carolina Crossroads I-20/26/126 Corridor Project.

"Public involvement will be important throughout the project as SCDOT identifies alternatives for the corridor," said **Brian Klauk**, Program Manager, Midlands Regional Production Group.

The community kickoff meeting was held May 12 in Columbia and was well attended. But anyone who could not be there was invited to view an "online meeting" at [www.SCDOTCarolinaCrossroads.com](http://www.SCDOTCarolinaCrossroads.com) between May



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**Midlands Regional Production Group Program Manager Brian Klauk is managing the public involvement meetings on the Carolina Crossroads Project. The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 10.**

12 and May 27.

Users at their convenience could access a video explaining the same processes provided at

the May 12 meeting. This "on-demand" feature is another way to encourage public involvement in the project.

"We had 157 attendees in person, 216 online meeting visitors, and to date 448,000 social media impressions," Klauk said. "We have received 158 comments as a result of the meeting. These are good numbers for a meeting very early in the process at a point when there were no alternatives to display."

SCDOT, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is working to develop an Environmental Impact Statement to promote informed decision making in the development of a solution to reduce congestion, improve traffic operations, increase safety and increase capacity within the Carolina Crossroads I-20/26/126 Corridor.

The I-20/26/126 Corridor is generally defined as I-20 from the Saluda River to the Broad River, I-26 from US 378 to Broad River Road, and I-126 from Colonial Life Boulevard to I-26.

First developed in the 1950s and 1960s and improved in the 1970s and 1980s, the design of I-20, I-26 and I-126 does not meet current demands, and the interstate access ramps consistently become congested. Finding an up-to-date solution has become a statewide priority.

Located in the heart of South Carolina, the I-20, I-26 and I-126 corridor serves as a major hub for Midlands' commuters, travelers and commerce. In addition to being a main route in and out of Columbia, I-26 is a thoroughfare for travelers headed to the coast and mountains for recreation, and a major cargo route between Lowcountry ports and Upstate manufacturers.

Klauk said the next meeting will be Sept. 10, which will be the Public Input meeting. It is the first in a series of meetings over the coming year as part of the EIS process.