

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

Prepared for the Town of Mt. Pleasant



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Table of Contents

1 Introduction..... 1

2 Existing Conditions..... 2

 2.1 Intrinsic Qualities 2

 2.1.1 Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources 3

 2.1.2 Scenic Resources 5

 2.1.3 Natural Resources 6

 2.1.4 Recreational Resources 7

 2.2 Roadway Characteristics 8

 2.2.1 General Characteristics 8

 2.2.2 Capacity and Pavement Condition..... 8

3 Strategies and Responsible Agencies..... 9

 3.1 Management Challenges and Actions to Date 9

 3.2 Potential Management Actions 10

 3.2.1 Natural and Scenic Resource Actions 10

 3.2.2 Historic and Cultural Resource Actions 10

 3.2.3 Recreational Resource Actions 11

 3.2.4 Roadway Actions 11

 3.3 Responsible Agencies 12

 3.3.1 Town of Mount Pleasant (TOMP) 12

 3.3.2 Charleston County 12

 3.3.3 Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG)..... 13

 3.3.4 South Carolina DOT (SCDOT) 13

4 Summary Table of Actions: Schedule for Implementation 14

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Study Area 2

Figure 2: Cultural and Archeological Resources 4

Figure 3: Scenic Resources 5

Figure 4: Natural Resources..... 6

Figure 5: Recreational Resources 7

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

1 Introduction

The purpose of this Corridor Management Plan (CMP) is to support the improvement and maintenance of the Mathis Ferry Road South Carolina Scenic Highway. The plan is focused on strategies for the conservation and enhancement of the route's intrinsic qualities and the promotion of tourism and economic development as called for in the South Carolina Code of Regulations 63-920 (added by State Register Volume 21, Issue No. 6, Part 2) of June 27, 1997. The regulation states the following:

- A. *The purpose of the local government's Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan is to provide for the conservation and enhancement of the route's intrinsic qualities as well as the promotion of tourism and economic development.*
- B. *The local government's Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan should include at a minimum the following:*
 - (1) *A strategy for maintaining and enhancing those identified intrinsic qualities within the corridor.*
 - (2) *A list of all agencies and organizations responsible for the implementation of the corridor management plan. This list should include the powers, duties, and responsibilities of those agencies and organizations as related to the conservation and enhancement of the route's intrinsic qualities.*
 - (3) *A schedule of when the strategies will be implemented.*

This document is organized as follows:

- **Existing Conditions** – This section presents the intrinsic qualities extant along the corridor, including its historic resources, cultural resources, archaeological resources, scenic resources, natural resources, and recreational resources. It also addresses existing roadway conditions.
- **Strategies and Responsible Agencies** – This section discusses management challenges to date for existing resources, actions taken thus far to address those challenges, and potential actions to be taken to address challenges that remain. This section also identifies the agencies responsible for the stewardship of this scenic Highway.
- **Summary Table of Actions** – A matrix summarizes the actions to be taken to preserve and enhance the Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway.

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

2 Existing Conditions

This section of the Corridor Management Plan reviews the existing features of Mathis Ferry Road. Intrinsic qualities that support the State designation of the Highway are reviewed, as well as other physical features of the corridor.

Figure 1: Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Study Area



2.1 Intrinsic Qualities

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance has identified six intrinsic qualities that support scenic Highway designations. These are:

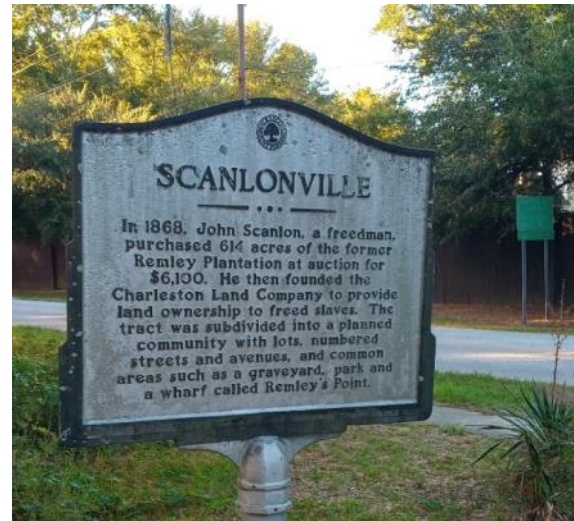
- Historic Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Archaeological Resources
- Scenic Resources
- Natural Resources
- Recreational Resources

The relevant intrinsic qualities for Mathis Ferry Road are discussed in the following sections.

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

2.1.1 Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

Cultural resources are not the primary contributor to the Highway experience on Mathis Ferry Road; however, a cursory review of SC ArchSite (<http://www.scarchsite.org>) lists a significant resource on the north side of Mathis Ferry Road along 5th Avenue, 6th Avenue, and 7th Avenue. As the Town of Mount Pleasant website states, the Scanlonville/Remley's Point Community is “a hidden and quiet marsh-front community located on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Mathis Ferry Road just past Fire Department #3. Established after the Civil War, this African American community enjoys a rich heritage spanning over 100 years. After the war, many former slaves began to establish their own farms and businesses. The development of Scanlonville is one such enterprise. In 1868, freedman-carpenter Robert Scanlon purchased the 614-acre Remley's Plantation that was bordered by the Charleston Harbor and the Wando River.”¹ Remley Point Cemetery, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located in Scanlonville. A historical marker identified during a recent field visit denotes the significance of the neighborhood.



¹ <https://www.tompsec.com/295/Scanlonville>

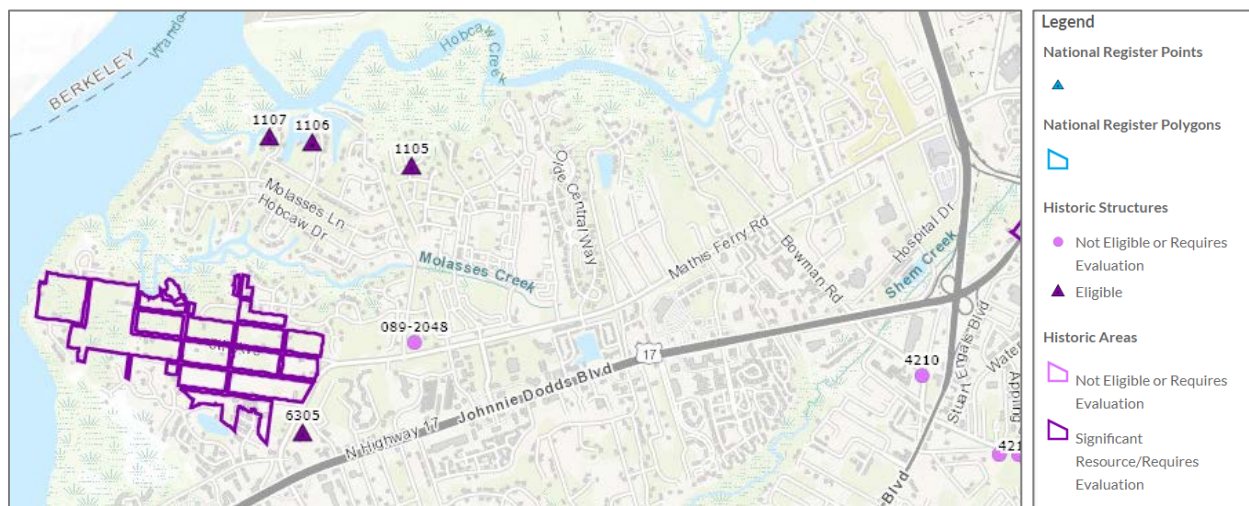
Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

Just south of and adjacent to Mathis Ferry Road, the Mount Pleasant Armory (Site 6305) is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Additionally, Site #089-2048 is located just north of Mathis Ferry Road along Muirhead Road; this site was identified in a report titled “Cultural Resources Survey of the Molasses Creek Crossing.” This site is not listed as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to areas identified on the SC ArchSite website, field observations and discussions with Town of Mount Pleasant staff identified an additional historic African American community at the intersection of Mathis Ferry Road and York Street, identified as the Greenhill Community. According to the historical marker erected in 2004 “*freedman Hardy Green purchased 30 acres of land along Mathis Ferry Road. The area was called Spark Hill but was later renamed Greenhill by the Moultrie School District.*” The area was a farming area in the 1920s-1940s and was a major source of income for the people of Greenhill, according to the website Historical Marker Project.²

No archaeological resources were identified in the study area.

Figure 2: Cultural and Archeological Resources



Source: www.scarchsite.org

² https://historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HMPEM_greenhill-community-greenhill-farming_Mt-Pleasant-SC.html

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

2.1.2 Scenic Resources

While development has encroached on the majority of this scenic highway, most of the corridor is flanked by canopy trees that overhang the roadway. These canopy trees and other surrounding foliage provide scenic views throughout the corridor and are valuable scenic resources. Maintenance of the existing canopy trees is critical to preserving the scenic value of the corridor. Therefore, establishing a viable strategy for urban forest succession that is consistent with flexibly-applied road design standards is an important goal for the corridor.



Figure 3: Scenic Resources



Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

2.1.3 Natural Resources

Despite much of the Mathis Ferry Road corridor having been developed, the canopy trees lining the roadway throughout the corridor provide opportunities for birds and other wildlife to flourish. In addition to the canopy trees, Molasses Creek runs just north of the corridor, terminating near Eastgate Road. The Wando River and Horlbeck Creek, while not immediately adjacent to the study area, are also nearby and provide further opportunities for wildlife in the area.



A cursory review of the US Fish and Wildlife Service website was conducted using the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool.³ The search noted 17 different endangered species, 18 migratory birds, and 1 marine mammal that could potentially be in the corridor, although no critical habitats are listed along the corridor.

The IPaC tool also identifies a few freshwater ponds in the study area and some wetlands associated with Molasses Creek adjacent to Mathis Ferry Road⁴.

Figure 4: Natural Resources



³ <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/location/U4F772SSCVAB5IVNUB4ODIJW7E/resources>

⁴ <https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/location/2OGYYBIIFFEANFGKDATKUTVGMY/resources#wetlands>

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

2.1.4 Recreational Resources

The Mathis Ferry Road Corridor includes a multi-use path on the roadway's north side from 7th Avenue to Eagle Street and on the south side from Eagle Street to under the I-526 overpass. The path is used for walking, running, and biking.

Other recreational resources are also present in the study area. Eastgate Park includes a soccer field, community garden, basketball court, and small playground. The park is adjacent to Mathis Ferry Road but has no direct connection to the multi-use path.

A private recreational facility, the I'On Club, is located just north of Mathis Ferry Road. The facility provides a fitness room, tennis courts, and aquatics for members. Access is directly off Mathis Ferry Road.

The Remley's Point public boat launch area, maintained by Charleston County, is located just east of the study area. Mathis Ferry Road is the primary route to access this facility. Remley's Point Community Center at 363 6th Street, just north of Mathis Ferry Road, also has a community playground and a lighted basketball court.



Figure 5: Recreational Resources



2.2 Roadway Characteristics

2.2.1 General Characteristics

Mathis Ferry Road is a narrow two-lane roadway with a speed limit of 35mph. A multi-use path runs on the north side of the roadway from 7th Avenue to Eagle Street and on the south side from Eagle Street to under the I-526 overpass. The intersections of Mathis Ferry Road at 7th Avenue, Muirhead Road, Shelmore Boulevard, and Hospital Drive are treated with single-lane landscaped roundabouts to control traffic. The intersection of Mathis Ferry Road at Bowman Road is signalized, with additional lanes for left turns on the east, west, and south legs. Mathis Ferry Road crosses several other minor roadways throughout the corridor, which are controlled by stop signs on the minor roadways.

2.2.2 Capacity and Pavement Condition

A cursory review of traffic count data on the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) website⁵ indicates Mathis Ferry Road experienced Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of approximately 14,000 vehicles in 2019. Looking back five years to 2014, the same location had an AADT of approximately 12,200 vehicles. These numbers suggest approximately 15 percent growth in daily traffic over the past five years.

Pavement conditions were reviewed using Google Streetview, which indicated the photos dated from 2019. The pavement is shown to be in generally good condition throughout the corridor; however, some occasional cracking was noticed.



⁵ <https://scdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=fe2e97641eac493094342c502369814b>

3 Strategies and Responsible Agencies

3.1 Management Challenges and Actions to Date

Corridors such as this face many ongoing challenges. Some of those challenges include:

- **Highway Signage** – It is important that scenic Highways be easy to navigate. The Charleston area is a very popular tourism destination and getting around can be a challenge for out-of-town visitors. A cursory review of Google Streetview identified highway signage consisting only of a small sign at the east end and several other locations along the corridor.
- **Encroaching Development** – A review of current aerial photography clearly shows that residential housing has cropped up both north and south of this corridor over the years. Dozens of homes line both the corridor’s north and south sides, and the corridor looks to be almost fully built out. To date, the Town of Mount Pleasant has implemented some zoning codes and land development regulations such as buffer requirements to help separate new development from the scenic highway.
- **Canopy Trees or Fixed Hazardous Objects (FHOs)** – A key element of this scenic Highway is the canopy trees which overhang the roadway. Because these trees are situated in a relatively stressful roadside environment, they may have shorter life spans than the same tree species exhibit in more natural woodland settings. As existing trees die, a workable strategy for urban forest succession is critical. Replacing dead or diseased trees is a challenge given the expanding development and increased capacity on the roadway. In addition, routine maintenance is required to keep the canopy from obstructing the roadway.
- **Enhanced Visitor Experience** – Culture continuously changes and adapts; thus, the visitor’s experience to the corridor must also continually adapt. New services to keep visitors interested and coming back for repeat visits are a must. Updated and enhanced visitor experiences benefit not only the sites themselves but also tourism related services such as hotels, restaurants, shopping centers, and other businesses in the surrounding area.
- **Drainage** – Despite drainage swales on both sides of the corridor, heavy rains can easily overwhelm the system, causing flooding and damage. Upgrading the drainage system would prevent further damage and erosion to the roadway, which is currently evident.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities** – The existing multi-use path runs from one end of the corridor to the other and is maintained by the Town of Mount Pleasant. In its current configuration, the path is very narrow and barely provides sufficient width for users to pass, thereby creating a safety issue. Furthermore, the path does not connect to many of the residential areas that surround the corridor, creating a disconnect to potential users.
- **Traffic Speed and Capacity** – Growth and development in the surrounding area has led to the corridor also experiencing growth in traffic, with traffic volumes increasing approximately 15 percent in five years. In addition to increased capacity issues, traffic

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

speeds regularly exceed the posted speed limit of 35mph. The Town of Mount Pleasant has completed several projects to help address these issues, including installing roundabouts at multiple locations along the Mathis Ferry Road corridor to help calm traffic speeds.

3.2 Potential Management Actions

Potential actions to address challenges and guide improvements within the corridor are provided in this section.

3.2.1 Natural and Scenic Resource Actions

Strategies to better the natural environment and preserve scenic resources are summarized below.

- **Invasive Species and Plants Removal** – In order to protect the natural habitat, invasive species and plants should be identified and removed from the corridor. Invasive species and plants are those that are not natural to the area and have travelled to or been brought into the area. These species and plants typically overrun natural flora and fauna, thus destroying the integrity of the natural habitat.
- **Tree Condition Survey/Inventory** – A survey or inventory of existing trees is key to understanding the location, age, health, and condition of trees in the corridor. It would enable informed decisions regarding later strategies to save the trees.
- **Canopy Tree Replacement** – To protect the scenic integrity of the corridor, a program to regularly maintain and replace canopy trees should be established by local groups or government. These trees are a key factor in the look and feel of the corridor and should be protected and preserved.
- **Corridor Adoption Program** – Local groups should be encouraged to adopt portions of Mathis Ferry Road. Organized litter removal and beautification efforts would not only protect the natural environment but also boost community pride.

3.2.2 Historic and Cultural Resource Actions

- **Signage Improvements** – Additional or enhanced signage should be installed at the beginning and end of the scenic Highway, as well as at intervals along the corridor to remind visitors that they are still on the Highway. Similarly, additional or enhanced signage at key historic locations throughout the corridor should also be provided.
- **Historic Marker and Interpretive Site Turnouts** – Developing turnouts near historical markers and interpretive sites along the roadway will enhance the visitor experience by providing places to stop and explore rather than simply driving through.
- **Additional Historic Markers** – Historic markers could be used to denote historically significant areas along the corridor and provide visitors with a frame of reference for the activities that occurred in the area. Appropriate permits and permissions must be acquired before any signs or markers can be placed in the roadway right-of-way.

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

- **Marketing Materials Conveying the Area’s Historic and Cultural Significance** – Brochure, website and/or social media marketing materials that convey the historic and cultural significance of the area could be a good way to promote and encourage visitors to the corridor. Materials could list significant historic sites, markers, or attractions, promote events at the sites, and educate visitors.

3.2.3 Recreational Resource Actions

- **Multi-Use Path Development and Maintenance** – The sidewalk’s current width does not accommodate cyclists. Widening the sidewalk to create a multi-use path would benefit cyclists and pedestrians. Establishing a multi-use path of 8 feet width would accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and, carefully designed, would have minimal impact on adjacent trees. A cursory review of Google Streetview identified several areas of the multi-use path with cracked pavement or overgrown vegetation. Providing a clear and smooth surface for users would improve safety and ultimately encourage more frequent facility use.
- **Residential Area Connectivity** – Although some connectivity to neighborhoods on the corridor’s north side is provided, very few opportunities to access the neighborhoods to the south exist. Improved connectivity would facilitate access to the path for exercise and recreational opportunities, particularly to currently cut-off residential areas.
- **Pedestrian Safety Measures at Cross Streets** – Besides the major intersections, no pedestrian safety measures are currently in place at cross streets. Pavement markings identifying crosswalks, and possibly signage where not already in place, could provide additional safety measures for path users.
- **The Mount Pleasant Way Development Efforts** – The Mount Pleasant Way is a coordinated effort by the Town of Mount Pleasant to connect bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the town. Its goal is to create broader availability, use and functionality of non-auto access to residential, commercial, historic, and recreational sites. A conceptual alignment in the Mount Pleasant, SC Comprehensive Plan 2018-2028⁶ identifies Mathis Ferry Road as part of the network.

3.2.4 Roadway Actions

- **Two-Lane Corridor** – In an effort to minimize increased traffic and excessive speeds, it is important to maintain a two-lane roadway through the corridor. Adding wider lanes would attract increased capacity and thus negatively impact the corridor’s scenic qualities. Any minor improvements, such as paved shoulders or sections of curb in some areas, should avoid impacts to canopy trees along the scenic Highway.

⁶ <https://www.tompsec.com/DocumentCenter/View/35339/RCh3IssuesAdopted10-13-2020>

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

- **Additional Curb** – In selected areas, additional curb with flume drainage to existing swales should be considered. The improved drainage and reduction in required setback for newly-planted trees behind a barrier curb may enable canopy tree replacement to occur and resolve FHO issues with SCDOT. The curb would also signal motorists that pull-outs and pedestrians are present along the corridor.
- **Traffic/Pedestrian Signals and Roundabouts** – Although options are limited for key intersections along the Mathis Ferry Road corridor, providing additional signalization to warn motorists of pedestrians would improve safety along the corridor. Additional roundabouts along the corridor should be considered with regard to reducing capacity and speed issues.
- **Gateway Entrance at 7th Avenue** – 7th Avenue provides a gateway from US 17 to the corridor and its historic, cultural, and recreational resources. Unified landscaping treatments and signage would define the corridor for all visitors.

3.3 Responsible Agencies

3.3.1 Town of Mount Pleasant (TOMP)

The Town of Mount Pleasant (TOMP) is the local municipality in which the Mathis Ferry Road corridor physically resides. A suburb of Charleston, it is the fourth largest municipality in South Carolina, with a census-estimated population of 91,684 residents in 2019. Currently, the Mayor of Mount Pleasant is Will Haynie, the Town Administrator is Eric Demoura, and there are eight at-large council members. The Engineering and Development Services Department Director is Brad Morrison.

Mount Pleasant Engineering and Development Services Department

100 Ann Edwards Lane
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
Phone: (843) 856-3080

3.3.2 Charleston County

The Mathis Ferry Road corridor and Town of Mount Pleasant are located within Charleston County. The Charleston County Transportation Program is funded by a half-cent sales tax referendum. For many years, Charleston County was responsible for pavement management in Mount Pleasant; however, the Town of Mount Pleasant took over that responsibility from 2012.

Charleston County Transportation Development

4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite C204
North Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 202-6137

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

3.3.3 Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG)

The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in which the Mathis Ferry Road corridor is located. The BCDCOG conducts planning activities to develop regional long-range transportation plans and initiatives for the area. The Executive Director of BCDCOG is Ron Mitchum, while the Planning Director is currently Kathryn Basha.

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments

5790 Casper Padgett Way
North Charleston, SC 29406
Phone: (843)529.0400

3.3.4 South Carolina DOT (SCDOT)

The Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway study area is in District 6 of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT). The administrator of District 6 is Tim Henderson. SCDOT also has offices in each county of the state, including Charleston.

SCDOT District 6 Office

6355 Fain Boulevard, Building A
N. Charleston, SC 29406
Phone: (843)740-1667

4 Summary Table of Actions: Schedule for Implementation

ID	Project Name/Description	Timeframe	Responsible
Natural and Scenic Resource Strategies			
N-1	Invasive Species and Plants Removal – Identify and remove invasive species and plants to protect the corridor’s natural habitat.	Ongoing	TOMP
N-2	Tree Condition Survey/Inventory – Conduct a survey or inventory of the location, age, health, and condition of existing trees in the corridor to enable informed decisions regarding later strategies to save the trees.	Short-Term	TOMP
N-3	Canopy Tree Replacement – Establish a program for local groups or government to regularly maintain and replace canopy trees to protect and preserve the corridor’s look and feel.	Ongoing	TOMP
N-4	Corridor Adoption Program – Develop a program for local groups’ adoption of the corridor for litter removal and beautification efforts to protect the natural environment and boost community pride.	Ongoing	TOMP
Historic and Cultural Resource Actions			
C-1	Signage Improvements – Provide additional or enhanced signage at the beginning and end of the scenic Highway and at intervals and key historic locations along the corridor.	Short-Term	TOMP SCDOT
C-2	Historic Marker and Interpretive Site Turnouts – Develop turnouts near historical markers and interpretive sites to enhance the visitor experience.	Long-Term	TOMP SCDOT
C-3	Additional Historic Markers – Add markers denoting historically significant areas along the corridor to enhance visitor experiences.	Short-Term	TOMP SCDOT

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

ID	Project Name/Description	Timeframe	Responsible
C-4	Marketing Materials Conveying the Area's Historic and Cultural Significance – Develop brochure, website and/or social media marketing materials to identify, educate and promote area visitation.	Ongoing	TOMP Charleston County NPS
Recreational Resource Strategies			
P-1	Multi-Use Path Widening – Widen the multi-use path to 8 feet to provide sufficient width for passing users to maneuver with minimal impact on adjacent trees.	Mid-Term	TOMP
P-2	Residential Area Connectivity – Provide connections between the multi-use path and residential neighborhoods to the north and south to facilitate access and mobility.	Mid-Term	TOMP
P-3	Pedestrian Safety Measures at Cross Streets – Install pavement markings and signage to improve multi-use safety.	Short-Term	TOMP SCDOT
P-4	Multi-Use Path Maintenance and Update – Repair and/or maintain the multi-use path to improve safety and encourage use.	Ongoing	TOMP
Roadway Actions			
R-1	The Mount Pleasant Way Development Efforts – Coordinate with The Mount Pleasant Way development efforts to create broader availability, use and functionality of non-auto access.	Short-Term	TOMP
R-2	Two-Lane Corridor – Minimize increased traffic and excessive speeds by maintaining a two-lane roadway and preserving corridor characteristics.	Ongoing	SCDOT
R-3	Additional Curb – Consider additional curb with flume drainage to existing swales in selected areas.	Long-Term	TOMP SCDOT

Mathis Ferry Road Scenic Highway Corridor Management Plan

ID	Project Name/Description	Timeframe	Responsible
R-4	Traffic/Pedestrian Signals and Roundabouts – Provide additional signalization and roundabouts at appropriate locations to reduce capacity and speed issues.	Long-Term	TOMP SCDOT
R-5	Gateway Entrance at 7th Avenue – Improve the 7 th Avenue gateway with unified landscaping treatments and signage to define the corridor for visitors.	Long-Term	TOMP