

Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP)

PROGRAM FY 2011 GRANT APPLICATION

PART A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Beaufort Rail Trail (Green Corridor)
Project Location (Include City/County, State):	City of Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina
State Priority (to be completed by State DOT):	
GRANTEE CONTACT INFORMATION	
Grantee Contact Name:	Robert Merchant, Long Range Planner
Agency/Tribal Government:	Beaufort County
Mailing Address (Street/P.O. Box):	100 Ribaut Rd. PO 1228
City, State, Zip code:	Beaufort, SC 29901-1228
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STATE DOT CONTACT INFORMATION	
State Contact Person:	Mark Pleasant, Statewide Planning Chief
Phone:	
Fax:	
E-Mail:	
FHWA DIVISION OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION	
Division Contact Person:	Wesley Blount, Office of Human Environment
Phone:	
Fax:	
E-Mail:	

CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION				
Congress Member:	Joe Wilson			
Congressional District No.:	2			
TCSP Program Funds:	\$1,600,000			
Matching Funds/In-kind Services Value:	\$400,000			
Matching Funds/In-kind Services Source:	Beaufort County			
Total TCSP-Related Project Costs:	\$2,000,000			
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE FHWA DIVISION OFFICE				
State Administered?		Yes		No
Division Administered?		Yes		No
“Transfer” TCSP funding for Project Administration?		Yes		No
If yes, which Federal Agency				
Will the project be obligated by September 30, 2011?		Yes		No
Date grant application approved by FHWA Division Office				

Part B. Project Abstract

Beaufort County requests \$1.6 million from the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP) for construction of 4.6 miles of a federally rail banked right of way into a 12-foot wide multi-use bike and pedestrian trail (see Attachment A). The project will provide a pedestrian/cycling corridor that parallels US 21 and Ribaut Road, two Federal-aid highways. The project will facilitate an underutilized mode of transportation in the region and will result in the reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) and promote pedestrian and cycling safety. Beaufort County has control of the railroad right-of-way and is ready to break ground as soon as funding is available.

Part C. Project Narrative

The request is to fund a 4.6-mile portion of the Beaufort Rail Trail, a 20-mile long pedestrian and cycling trail that will eventually link Port Royal, SC to the East Coast Greenway in Sheldon, SC (US 17). The 4.6-mile portion is located in the most densely populated area of Northern Beaufort County. It parallels US 21 (28,700 ADTs), a principal arterial, and Ribaut Road (19,100 ADTs), a minor arterial— both are classified as Federal-aid highways. This project will help to

reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMTs) along these arterials and the regional road network by facilitating an alternative mode of transportation that is currently underutilized in the region. The two arterials currently lack adequate pedestrian facilities and cycling improvements. Both highways bear heavy vehicular traffic and have narrow sidewalks that directly abut the road with numerous curb cuts making bike and pedestrian travel unsafe and uncomfortable (see Attachment B). Improving these highways with bike lanes and wider sidewalks within the existing right-of-way would be costly and impractical and existing development precludes expansion of the right-of-way. Therefore, this project will provide a safe parallel pedestrian and cycling corridor that reduces overall VMTs in the region.

Project reduces the need for costly future investments in public infrastructure: The Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan projects that by 2025, US 21 will need to be widened to 6 lanes from Broad River Blvd. to Clarendon Rd. to accommodate projected growth. This project will reduce VMTs and delay or eliminate the need for this \$40 million project.

Project is supported by state, regional and local plans: Components of the entire project are included in SCDOT's State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and also the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The Comprehensive Plans for Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort and the Town of Port Royal specifically call for the development of the Beaufort Rail Trail. The Beaufort County Comprehensive Plan also recognizes that the Beaufort Rail Trail serves both vital transportation and recreation objectives. The plan identifies the development of alternatives transportation modes (pedestrian/cycling facilities, transit, and ferry); along with access management and land use as three interrelated policies aimed at reducing VMTs and maximize the efficiency of the regional road network.

Project is part of regional strategy to reduce VMTs: The development of the Beaufort Rail Trail is one of many VMT reducing policies that the County has been implementing over the last 5 years to combat the impacts of sprawl on the regional road network. The County has adopted four corridor-specific access management plans. It has established a growth boundary in the northern County, jointly recognized by the City of Beaufort and Town of Port Royal, aimed at targeting growth and infrastructure investment into urban areas. The County is now developing a form-based code to promote development of mixed-use, interconnected, pedestrian-friendly communities that result in more internal trip capture. It is also establishing fixed route transit service in the northern County.

Project improves the environment: The project improves the environment by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Local actions, such as the development of pedestrian and cycling facilities that result in VMT reduction also reduce GHG emissions. A 3,200-foot portion of the project will help establish a "green corridor" along US 21. The blighted US 21 corridor (see Attachment B) between Albergotti Creek and SC 170 is the main entranceway into Beaufort. This project will create a park like setting along a formerly light industrial part of the highway thereby creating a parkway that will improve aesthetics, deaden sound, and reduce an urban heat island.

Project increases the region's economic competitiveness: The project will improve quality of life and provide an alternative mode of transportation to link people with jobs – two important

criteria for companies that are considering relocation to the region. The project also provides opportunities for recreation and ecotourism businesses. These include bicycle sales, rental and repair businesses; and fishing and small watercraft outfitters to build on the marsh access near the trestles. In addition, property values are projected to increase as a result of this project. A 'linear park' with transportation amenities is very desirable both in the commercial and residential sectors.

Beaufort County is committed to this project: Beaufort County has aggressively pursued funding for this project. This project application is one of five that we have made over the past few years to enhance and expand our transportation system. The County has received a \$3.1 million Bus Livability Grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to fund a multi-modal transportation network in northern Beaufort County, \$1.4 of which will fund a 2.2 mile segment of the trail (see Attachment A). The most recent application (March, 2011) to the South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Dept. included involvement and support from individuals, advocacy groups, municipalities, local businesses and other organizations. This project will create transportation choices, improve safety, promote fitness and reduce obesity. Neighborhoods and businesses in the Northern County have little connectedness, so walking or bicycling is difficult and dangerous. This project will serve as a spine for safe travel in the densest areas.

Project Budget: The total project budget is \$2 million; \$1.6 million is being requested from the FHA TCSP; \$400,000 will be provided by the County as a match. The cost of the 4.6 mile project is based on a figure of \$75/linear foot to construct a paved 12' wide trail. An additional \$200,000 is to repair and retrofit the bridge over Albergotti Creek (see Attachment B). The 2.2 mile middle section of the described trail is being funded by an FTA Bus Livability Grant. Please refer to the accompanying map.

Expeditious completion of project: Beaufort County is ready to begin this project. Beaufort Jasper Water Sewer Authority owns the right-of-way and has granted the County an easement to use the surface for a trail. The project will begin 4th quarter of CY 2011 and will be completed by the 1st quarter of 2013.

Activity	4 th Qtr 2011	1 st Qtr 2012	2 nd Qtr 2012	3 rd Qtr 2012	4 th Qtr 2012	1 st Qtr 2013
Environmental Assessment and Engineering						
Permitting						
Construction						

Part D. Project Eligibility

*Is the project located on a Federal-aid highway? **Yes, US 21 (principal arterial) and Ribaut Rd.(minor arterial) are Federal Aid Highways.***

*Is the project a corridor preservation activity necessary to implement transit-oriented development plans, traffic calming measures, or other coordinated transportation, community, and system preservation practices? **Yes, the project is a corridor preservation plan and part of a coordinated transportation, community and system preservation plan. See narrative for details.***

