

Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP)

PROGRAM FY 2012 GRANT APPLICATION

PART A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Beaufort Rail Trail (Green Corridor), Phase 2
Project Location (Include City/County, State):	City of Beaufort/Beaufort County
State Priority (to be completed by State DOT):	
GRANTEE CONTACT INFORMATION	
Grantee Contact Name:	Robert Merchant, Long Range Planner
Agency/Tribal Government:	Beaufort County
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STATE DOT CONTACT INFORMATION	
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FHWA DIVISION OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION	
Division Contact Person:	Wesley Blount, Office of Human Environment
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CONGRESSIONAL INFORMATION	
Congress Member:	Rep. Joe Wilson and Senators Lindsey Graham and Jim DeMint
Congressional District No.:	SC-02
TCSP Program Funds:	\$828,000

Matching Funds/In-kind Services Value:	\$207,000			
Matching Funds/In-kind Services Source:	Beaufort County			
Total TCSP-Related Project Costs:	\$1,035,000			
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, 2012?		Yes		No
Date grant application approved by FHWA Division Office				

Part B. Project Abstract

Beaufort County requests \$828,000 from the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program (TCSP) for construction of 1.4 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, a Federal-aid highway. 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 1.4-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 1.4-mile portion is located in the most densely populated area of Northern Beaufort County and will provide a safe pedestrian connection between the Marine Corps Air Station (5,125 employees) and downtown Beaufort. It parallels US 21 (28,700 ADTs), a principal arterial, which is classified as a Federal-aid highway. 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 arterial currently lacks adequate pedestrian facilities and cycling improvements. The highway bears heavy vehicular traffic and has narrow sidewalks that directly abut the road with numerous curb cuts making bike and pedestrian travel unsafe and uncomfortable (see Attachment B). Improving this highway 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 1,000-foot portion of this particular segment will help establish a "green corridor" along US 21. The blighted US 21 corridor (see Attachment Photos) 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 several that we have made over the past few years to enhance and expand our cycling and pedestrian network. The County has received a \$1,043,520 grant from the 2011 Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program and has committed \$260,880 in a local match to fund a 2.1 mile segment of the same trail (see Attachment). 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 \$1,035,000. The cost of the 1.4 mile project is based on a figure of \$75/linear foot to construct a paved 12' wide trail. An additional \$270,000 is to repair and retrofit the bridge over Albergotti Creek (see Attachment B). \$135,000 is allocated for project design, engineering, and administration.
 - Amount of Federal TSCP Funds Requested: \$828,000
 - Commitment of Other Funds: Beaufort County will provide a cash match of \$207,000 which equals 20% of the total project budget.
- **Previous TSCP Funding:** Beaufort County received \$1,043,520 in FY2011 TSCP funds to fund a 2.1 mile segment of the trail (see Attachment A) from Depot Road north to SC 280 (Parris Island Gateway).
- **Project Administration:** Beaufort County will seek Local Public Agency (LPA) status with SCDOT to administer this project. Beaufort County has substantial experience administering federally funded transportation projects and is qualified to carry out all the project activities through its staff and consultant personnel. The County will appoint a member of its staff who is a Professional Engineer as project administrator.
- **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 2nd quarter of CY 2012 and will be completed by the 3rd quarter of 2013.

Activity	2 nd Qtr 2012	3 rd Qtr 2012	4 th Qtr 2012	1 st Qtr 2013	2 nd Qtr 2013	3 rd 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) is a Federal Aid Highway.
- **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.

