



Lowcountry Rapid Transit Receives Key Federal Approval

Project approved for entry into Engineering phase by Federal Transit Administration

North Charleston, SC (Aug. 17, 2022) – Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT), a 21.3-mile bus rapid transit system and South Carolina’s first mass transit infrastructure project, has received approval from the Federal Transit Administration to enter into the New Starts Engineering phase of the FTA Capital Investment Grants Program (CIG).

This much-anticipated approval is a requirement of Federal transit law and moves the project one step closer to full funding and completion.

LCRT is governed by a four-party intergovernmental agreement that includes the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG), Charleston County, SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and the Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA). The maximum Federal contribution to the project is now set at \$375,060,506, or 60% of the current project cost. The local project funding match is committed from the Charleston County half-cent sales tax.

With this Engineering approval, BCDCOG has automatic pre-award authority to incur various reimbursable project-related costs, including Engineering activities and vehicle purchases.

The immediate next step is to procure an Engineering design firm. That process will be undertaken via the SCDOT procurement process, with design work projected to begin in early 2023. At the end of this phase, which includes further public participation, the project will be 100% designed.

The Engineering phase is anticipated to last about two years. After that, the project will be reviewed for execution of the Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) and authorization to enter the Construction phase, with an opening date of 2028.

What Leaders Are Saying ...

Ron Mitchum, Executive Director, BCDCOG

The FTA is required to evaluate proposed projects against a number of criteria and ensure that prospective grant recipients demonstrate the technical, legal, and financial capability to implement the project. BCDCOG has met those thresholds, and we are pleased to make this announcement today.

Christie Hall, Secretary, SCDOT

Our beautiful state is the 10th fastest growing state in the nation with the Charleston metropolitan area being among the fastest-growing parts of South Carolina. The innovative Lowcountry Bus Rapid Transit project has the potential to improve the quality of life and reduce congestion for Charleston and North Charleston. SCDOT is proud to be a partner in this effort to make this line a reality.

Teddie Pryor, Chairman, Charleston County Council

Entry into Engineering is an exciting development that has been made possible by the hard work of many throughout the region -- but there is still more to achieve. We thank the community for its support and partnership in helping to make LCRT a reality.

Mike Seekings, Chairman, CARTA

Lowcountry Rapid Transit is history in the making, which is saying something for our region. LCRT is truly new ground – both here and throughout all of South Carolina. This is the state's first mass transit infrastructure project, and it is now one important step closer to reality.

Steve Dudash, Chairman, LCRT Strategic Leaders Partnership Committee

Private-sector leaders across the region have long recognized the importance of Lowcountry Rapid Transit and its transformative potential. We applaud the project partners for bringing LCRT to this point, and we stand united in continued support.

About Lowcountry Rapid Transit

Lowcountry Rapid Transit is a bus rapid transit system that will travel the spine of the Lowcountry, along US 78 and US 52 (Rivers Avenue). A comprehensive study conducted by the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments identified bus rapid transit as the best transit solution to combat increased congestion in our region.

LCRT will transform the infrastructure in our region, improving transportation for public transit riders, commuters, and pedestrians. This modern transportation system will be a catalyst for economic growth and upward mobility throughout the area. For more information, visit the project website at LowcountryRapidTransit.com.

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