



Georgetown County Government

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County to begin work on long-awaited bike path connector

GEORGETOWN COUNTY, S.C. – After a decade of delays, a pivotal section of the Waccamaw Bike Trail is finally about to be completed.

Georgetown County was recently notified it has received a \$100,000 grant from S.C. Parks, Recreation and Tourism for the project. Additionally, “all the property and easement issues have finally been settled,” said James Coley, a project manager with the County’s Engineering and Capital Projects Division.

The project has long been considered one of the most important for the bike trail, because it will connect two significant stretches of bikeway that run from Willbrook Blvd. up Business 17 and through Murrells Inlet. Once the planned section of bikeway from Boyle Drive north to Trace Drive in North Litchfield is completed, cyclists can ride safely from Litchfield to the Georgetown/Horry County line on a designated, paved bikeway.

The majority of the trail through Litchfield to Business 17 is well off the road, taking cyclists through a lush wooded path that feels miles away from the heavy traffic on the highway. However, the path’s planned 0.6-mile route from Boyle to Trace runs under Santee Cooper transmission lines. That, along with funding and some other private property easements kept the projects on hold.

That means cyclists have had to come off the trail and travel down residential streets – where many seasonal visitors may not know the bike trail exists in that area and that they need to be on the lookout for cyclists – to access the next section of pathway. Cyclists and residents in that area say it’s a safety hazard.

“I’m really excited to see this project coming together,” said Ray Funnye, Georgetown County Public Services Director. “It’s one of those things we have been working on for what seems like forever and it’s going to be a huge benefit for people who utilize the bikeway in that area. They’ll no longer have to navigate a shared space with vehicle traffic, and the bikeway in North Litchfield will become much safer with this addition.”

The county had previously received a SCPRT grant for the project, but had to return it in 2014 when it couldn’t get easements for all the properties along the planned route.

“That really has been the biggest hurdle here,” Coley said. “But we finally have all the pieces in place and we’re hoping to start construction this summer and be done in the fall.”

The \$100,000 grant amount is the maximum available from SCPRT. Matching funds will be provided by Bike the Neck, a fundraising and advocacy group for bike trails on the Waccamaw Neck, along with Georgetown County. A total cost for the project won’t be known until bids come in. The deadline for bids is May 20.

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