



South Carolina
Department of Transportation

Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project

Frequently Asked Questions:

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE & NEED FOR THE BERLIN MYERS PARKWAY PHASE 3 PROJECT?

Berlin Myers Parkway is an alternate primary route to US 17A in the Town of Summerville. The first two phases were constructed in the early 1990's. This project is needed to accommodate increasing traffic volumes in the Summerville area. By 2040, projected traffic volumes show that numerous roadways in the project study area will be operating at a poor level of service if Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 is not constructed. Traffic modeling shows that the construction of the Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 will help improve traffic conditions along Summerville roads by up to 45%.

IS THIS PROJECT FULLY FUNDED AND WHO IS PAYING FOR THE PROJECT?

Project is fully funded and is anticipated to cost \$118 million. Project funding sources include Dorchester County transportation sales tax, CHATS guideshare funding, federal earmarks and SC Transportation Infrastructure Bank funds.

WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BMP PHASE 3?

Schedule is dependent on the timing of USACE permit approvals. However, we anticipate permit approvals in June and a Fall 2020 construction bid opening, with actual construction work starting on the site in early 2020.

WHY WAS PHASE 3 NOT CONSTRUCTED IN THE 1990'S WITH THE REST OF THE PARKWAY?

The Berlin Myers Parkway Project initially began in the 1970s. In 1979, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was approved by the Federal Highway Association (FHWA). In 1987, a NEPA re-evaluation of the 1979 EIS was completed and approved. Between 1990 and 1995, Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Berlin Myers Parkway were constructed under a bonding program. There was not sufficient funding available at that time to construct phase 3. In 2004, the Dorchester County Tax Authority (DCTA) was formed and enacted a sales tax to fund Phase 3 of the Berlin Myers Parkway. In 2005, right-of-way acquisition began for Phase 3. In 2006, an Environmental Assessment (EA)/Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) for Phase 3 was issued by the FHWA. However, in response to Hurricane Katrina, the US Army Corp of Engineers implemented new requirements regarding changes to federally regulated flood risk management projects. Since BMP Phase 3 is being proposed adjacent to the Sawmill Branch flood risk management channel under USACE jurisdiction, additional coordination and reviews would be required in order to gain permit approvals. Between 2006 and 2019, the project team has conducted various design modifications and environmental reviews for the Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project in an effort to meet these new requirements.

WHAT AGENCIES ARE INVOLVED IN THE APPROVALS FOR THIS PROJECT?

SCDOT is the project owner for the Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project. SCDOT is coordinating with FHWA, USACE, FEMA, Town of Summerville, and Dorchester County for the project planning, permitting, and construction of the Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project.



WHY HAVE THE WETLAND IMPACTS INCREASED SINCE THE PREVIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IN 2006?

Following the NEPA process, extensive environmental reviews have been conducted for this project. In **2006**, an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project was completed and a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) was issued by the FHWA. In **2006**, the *Rapanos v. United States* decision expanded wetland protection regulations. In **2009**, a NEPA reevaluation of the 2006 EA was submitted and approved by the FHWA. Following the 2009 NEPA reevaluation, the project study area was reevaluated under the new wetland protection regulations, which increased the amount of protected wetlands impacted by the project. So while the project design did not change, the amount of wetlands impacted increased due to the expanded wetland protections.

WHY IS A SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT BEING PREPARED FOR THIS PROJECT?

Due to the significant age of the original Environmental Assessment, FHWA required that a supplemental EA be prepared in order to fully evaluate the project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act. The Supplemental EA addresses the expanded project study area, increased wetland study area and impacts, and includes the modified project design including flood mitigation efforts. In **2019**, the project team submitted the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to the FHWA, which was approved and signed in December 2019. A public hearing will be held on January 23, 2020 to present the Supplemental Environmental Assessment and receive public comments on the project.

WHY IS A SINGLE POINT URBAN INTERCHANGE (SPUI) BEING PROPOSED AT THE EAST CAROLINA AVENUE INTERSECTION WITH THE BERLIN G MYERS PARKWAY?

Using a single-point urban interchange design for the Berlin Myers Parkway/East Carolina Avenue intersection will allow large traffic volumes to navigate safely and efficiently through this interchange (which has limited space), while allowing thru-traffic to flow freely along Berlin Myers Parkway.

WILL A NOISE WALL BE CONSTRUCTED WITH THIS NEW ROADWAY?

The traffic noise study was updated in 2016 and reviewed in 2019 by the project team. Three locations along the corridor were identified for consideration of noise walls. Upon further analysis, no noise walls were determined to be reasonable and/or feasible in accordance with the SCDOT Noise Policy.

HOW WILL THE SAWMILL BRANCH BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PATH BE IMPACTED BY THIS PROJECT?

SCDOT has worked closely with the Town of Summerville to avoid and minimize impacts to the Sawmill Branch Pathway. A 1.5 mile segment of the Sawmill Branch Trail between E. Carolina Avenue and Luden Drive will be reconstructed. This trail segment will be reconstructed in essentially the same location, except at a lower elevation to accommodate the project's floodplain mitigation measures. The pathway will be reconstructed and reopened as soon as it is safe for the public to enter this area again. A new segment of the trail will be constructed between Luden Drive and US 17A, creating additional access points to the pathway.

For safety reasons, bicycle and pedestrian access from Elizabeth Street will be removed. To replace the Elizabeth Street pedestrian access, a pedestrian ramp/sidewalk that begins at Coralie Drive will be constructed. To access the trail, pedestrians and bicyclists will travel along the proposed parkway's sidewalk, utilize the signalized crosswalk at the East Carolina Avenue intersection, and then proceed to the trail's entrance.



The trail parking area located on Luden Drive will be removed as part of the project. The Town of Summerville has committed to providing a new permanent parking area in close proximity to the existing Luden Drive parking area that will be open to the public once the project is complete. Trail parking areas located at Bacon's Bridge Road, Wampee Curve, and Cross Creek Drive will remain open.

The segment of the Sawmill Branch Trail between East Carolina Avenue/Bacon's Bridge Road and Luden Drive will be closed during project construction. A temporary detour route around this closed trail segment will be implemented. The temporary trail detour will route path users along Bacon's Bridge Road to Edisto Drive to Axtell Drive to King Charles Circle to Luden Drive and then back onto Sawmill Branch Trail.

WHY IS IT TAKING SO LONG TO GET PERMITS FOR THIS PROJECT?

The Sawmill Branch Canal is a federal flood risk management project constructed by the USACE in 1971. The Sawmill Branch flood control project consisted of approximately 9 miles of channel improvements to an existing waterway. The Sawmill Branch flood risk management project provides measures to reduce the risk of damages from flooding to homes, businesses, and public property along Sawmill Branch and in the Summerville area. Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project will alter the Sawmill Branch flood risk management project by constructing a roadway that is adjacent to the canal, which has the potential to decrease the water storage and alter the water flow conditions. To minimize the roadway's potential impacts to Sawmill Branch floodplains, extensive efforts have been made to understand and mitigate any impacts that would affect function of Sawmill Branch flood risk management project. SCDOT has conducted extensive hydraulic modeling for both FEMA and USACE in order to demonstrate how the proposed roadway may alter Sawmill Branch.

FEMA ANALYSIS OF SAWMILL BRANCH

- Since the Sawmill Branch floodplain is considered a Special Flood Hazard Area, FEMA has regulatory authority to evaluate potential floodplain impacts and enforce floodplain management.

USACE SECTION 408 PERMISSION REQUEST

- Since the Berlin Myers Parkway Phase 3 Project would alter the Sawmill Branch flood risk management project, the project team must obtain approval on a Section 408 Permission Request from the USACE.

WILL THIS PROJECT RESULT IN INCREASED FLOODING ON MY PROPERTY?

Extensive hydraulic modeling was conducted in order to demonstrate water storage and water flow conditions are not negatively impacted by this project. To minimize the roadway's potential impacts to Sawmill Branch floodplains, extensive efforts have been made to understand and mitigate any impacts that would affect function of the Sawmill Branch flood risk management project. SCDOT has conducted separate hydraulic analyses to address FEMA and USACE requirements. FEMA modeling was performed to ensure compliance with the FEMA National Flood insurance program requirements. USACE modeling was performed to demonstrate that the project would not impair the usefulness of the Sawmill Branch flood risk management project or otherwise be injurious to the public interest. Some members of the public received a letter recently from SCDOT notifying them of the change in water surface elevations on their property. After extensive analysis, the minor changes in water surface elevations are considered to be insignificant and not injurious to the public interest. Some property owners may receive an additional notification from FEMA in the future notifying them again of this same information in accordance with FEMA requirements.



WILL SCDOT BE PURCHASING ADDITIONAL LAND OR RIGHT OF WAY FOR THIS PROJECT?

Right of way was initially acquired by Dorchester County for this project when they initiated work on this project in 2005. Some additional rights of way was acquired by SCDOT in 2018. All ROW has essentially been secured, with exception of a couple of tracts that are still in final negotiations and settlement.

WHAT EFFECT WILL THE PROJECT HAVE ON THE HISTORIC NEWINGTON PLANTATION RICE FIELDS?

Remnants of historic inland rice fields associated with Newington Plantation may be located within the general study area. These remnants have been severely impacted by modern developments to such a degree that the integrity of the rice fields is significantly diminished and they are not considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on any intact historic inland rice fields.

