

Charleston County News Release
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County Awards Program Management Contract for Half-Cent Sales Tax Transportation Projects

Contract provides for oversight, management and construction services for the road improvement portion of the half-cent sales tax revenues.

With approval of the Transportation (Half-Cent) Sales Tax in November 2004, the voters of Charleston County committed their tax dollars to fund the upgrade of area highways, bridges, mass transit systems and related facilities. On July 12, 2005, Charleston County Council took a major step in this process by approving the award of the Program Management contract to The LPA Group, Inc. (LPA), a local engineering, architecture and planning firm.

The \$31 million contract will provide for oversight, management and construction services for the road improvement portion of the Transportation Sales Tax revenues, with this portion currently estimated in excess of \$840 million. LPA will work as an extension of Charleston County staff to manage the program budget and schedule, and to oversee and coordinate the work of the many engineering design companies and contractors involved in the development of roads.

“The approval of this contract is a significant event for Charleston County. It not only marks the beginning of the largest public construction program ever undertaken by Charleston County, it lets us begin to control our own destiny in the timing of our much needed highway improvements,” said Leon Stavrinakis, Chairman of the Charleston County Council.

Upon completion of the first five-year contract term, Charleston County will have the option to renew the firm’s contract for an additional five years.

“The County and LPA will work shoulder-to-shoulder to deliver over \$840 million in transportation improvements funded through the One-Half Cent Sales Tax Program,” said Roland Windham, Charleston County Administrator.

An important aspect of the contract will be involvement of Disadvantaged Businesses. Special efforts will focus on assigning specific elements of work within the management contract, as well as in subsequent engineering and construction contracts, to Disadvantaged Businesses.

Other contract work elements include the development of a Community Outreach Program to inform and engage all portions of the County in planning future projects funded by the program. Also, an On-The-Job Training Program will be designed to help area residents who are interested in developing the technical skills involved in the delivery of projects funded by the program.

A familiar face in the Charleston area, LPA has worked with the County on a variety of other transportation projects. Most recently, LPA was responsible for the design of the Interstate-26 interchange improvements and drainage for the new Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge.

“This contract represents an extension of a 15-year relationship between Charleston County and LPA,” said Timothy Scott, Vice Chairman of Charleston County Council.

Among the initial projects to be included in the road improvement program are:

- A Comprehensive Transportation Plan Study that includes an assessment of road and travel patterns throughout the County, a forecast of road project needs over the next 25 years, a review of funding sources, and a review of transit plans.
- The initial stages of right-of-way acquisition and engineering for the widening and improvement of Johnnie Dodds Boulevard from the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge to the I-526 overpass.
- Glen McConnell Parkway/Bees Ferry Road intersection improvements.
- Various improvements on James Island, including Folly Road and Maybank Highway intersection improvements, Harbor View Road improvements, and an off-ramp interchange loop from the James Island Connector to Folly Road.
- An access ramp from U.S. Highway 17 onto U.S. Highway 61 Connector near Wesley Drive.
- Acquisition and construction of a roadway connecting Ashley Phosphate Road and the Palmetto Parkway through Spartan Boulevard.
- Isaac-German Watershed improvements, including the hydrologic study of a 3,180-acre watershed and the preparation of contract documents for the construction of improvements within the watershed.

While LPA will manage the program, other firms who qualify through subsequent solicitations issued by the County will provide the majority of engineering design services for the projects included in the program.

For more information on the Transportation Sales Tax and to keep up with meetings of the Transportation Advisory Board and the Greenbelt Advisory Board, visit the official Web site at www.smallchangeformbigchange.org.

- Written by Jennie Davis -