

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is a PEL Study?

A Planning and Environmental Linkages, or PEL, study connects transportation planning with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. It brings technical analysis, environmental review, agency coordination, and community input together early, reducing duplicated work and helping future projects move forward more efficiently.

[Learn more about the PEL process.

https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_initiatives/pel.aspx]

2. Why is the Durant Avenue RCE PEL study needed?

Trains crossing Rivers Avenue near Durant Avenue regularly cause traffic delays, limit emergency access, and create safety concerns. These challenges could grow as rail traffic increases and the future Lowcountry Rapid Transit route begins operating through the area.

3. What area does the study cover?

The study area extends along Rivers Avenue from approximately Piggly Wiggly Drive to Columbia Avenue. It includes the railroad crossing near Durant Avenue and nearby transportation facilities, including Hock Avenue and the Seven-Mile Viaduct.

4. What improvements will be considered?

The study will evaluate potential improvements to reduce conflicts between trains and roadway traffic. Possible solutions have not yet been selected and will be developed through technical analysis, agency coordination, and community input.

5. Is this a construction project?

No. This is a planning study that will identify and evaluate potential transportation solutions. Any future construction project would require additional design, environmental review, approvals, and funding.

6. How will community and environmental resources be considered?

The study team will consider neighborhoods, businesses, parks, historic and cultural resources, natural resources, community facilities, walking, biking, and transit access. Potential solutions will be evaluated based on transportation benefits and possible effects on the surrounding community and environment.

Considering these resources early will help identify solutions that meet the project's safety, mobility, and connectivity goals while avoiding or minimizing impacts. This work may also

be carried forward into the NEPA process, reducing duplication and helping a preferred solution move ahead more efficiently.

7. Who is leading and funding the study?

The City of North Charleston and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments are leading the study, with support from consultant HNTB.

The Federal Railroad Administration is the lead federal agency and is overseeing the study and grant. The South Carolina Department of Transportation is providing technical assistance and review.

The study is supported by a competitive \$940,000 federal Railroad Crossing Elimination grant and \$260,000 from the City of North Charleston.

Learn more about the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program

<https://railroads.dot.gov/crossing-safety-program>]

8. How can the public participate?

Residents, businesses, property owners, community organizations, travelers, and other stakeholders can participate through:

- Surveys
- Community and stakeholder outreach
- Online and emailed comments
- Public Information Meetings

Public feedback will help identify local priorities and inform the evaluation of potential solutions. Visit the project website for ways to get involved. riversdurantpel.com

9. When will public meetings be held?

Public Information Meetings will be held at key points during the study. Dates, locations, meeting materials, and opportunities to comment will be posted on this website as they become available.

10. What happens after the PEL Study?

The study will identify and document potential transportation improvements for further consideration. Its findings may be carried forward into future environmental review and project development, helping avoid unnecessary rework and move a preferred solution toward implementation faster.

Any future project would still require additional evaluation, approvals, and funding.