

Friends of the LOWLINE

Community Impact Overview

THE LOWLINE: WHO IT SERVES AND WHY IT MATTERS

For more than 50 years, Interstate 26 has divided the Charleston peninsula. Eight neighborhoods from east to west, separated. Thousands of residents living on either side of a concrete barrier with no safe, direct connection between them. The Lowline changes that. Opening in 2027, 1.7 miles of linear park will run through the heart of the peninsula, transforming an abandoned rail corridor into a free, public green space for every person who lives, learns, works, or visits here.

PARK ACCESS

Only 54% of Charleston residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, well below the national average of 76% for the 100 most populous U.S. cities. Just 7% of Charleston's land is dedicated to parks and recreation, compared to a national median of 15%. Phase 1 of the Lowline adds 7 acres of publicly accessible green space to the center of the peninsula, the most significant expansion of parkland in a generation.

PARK ACCESS — CHARLESTON VS. NATIONAL BENCHMARKS

Residents within a 10-minute walk of a park

54% vs. 76%

Charleston National avg. (100 largest U.S. cities)



Source: Trust for Public Land ParkScore, 2024

Land dedicated to parks and recreation

7% vs. 15%

Charleston National median



Source: Trust for Public Land ParkScore, 2024

Phase 1 of the Lowline adds **7 acres** of publicly accessible green space to the center of the peninsula — the most significant expansion of parkland in a generation.

SAFETY

Preliminary 2025 data from the South Carolina Highway Patrol shows that 152 pedestrians and cyclists have already died on South Carolina roads this year.

152

pedestrians and cyclists
killed
on SC roads in 2025 alone

The Lowline provides a protected, car-free route through the center of the peninsula, giving residents, students, and visitors a safe alternative for daily travel.

Friends of the Lowline partners with Charleston Moves and the East Coast Greenway Alliance to advance broader bike and pedestrian safety across the city.

Source: SC Highway Patrol preliminary data, 2025, via The Post and Courier

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SCHOOLS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

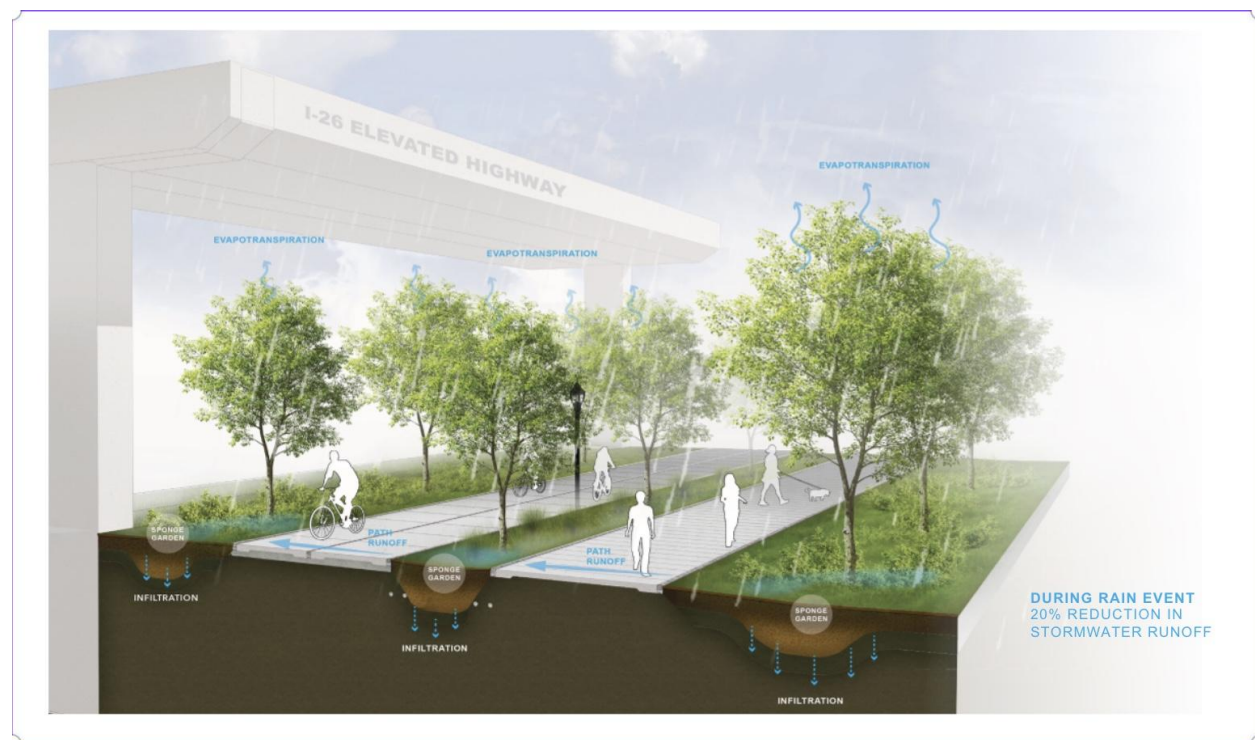
Four schools sit directly along or adjacent to the Lowline, collectively serving more than **1,400 students**.

GRADES 6–12 Charleston Charter School for Math and Science 559 students enrolled 67% students of color STEM project-based curriculum built to use the Lowcountry as a classroom. Backs directly up to the corridor. <i>Source: U.S. News & World Report, 2023–2024</i>	GRADES PK–8 James Simons Montessori 371 students enrolled Title I / 100% free or reduced lunch Supported by Charleston Promise Neighborhood. Lowline connects at Huger Street and Enston Homes gateway. <i>Source: SC Report Cards, U.S. News, 2023–2024</i>	GRADES K4–8 Charleston Catholic School 184 students enrolled Community-rooted, K4–8 Serves families across downtown and the greater Charleston area. Located at 888 King Street. <i>Source: Charleston Catholic School</i>	GRADES PK–5 Meeting Street Academy 305 students enrolled +24 pts reading · +28 pts math Students outperform peers from similar income backgrounds nationally. Tuition-free, founded 2008. <i>Source: meetingstreetschools.org, 2024–2025</i>
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For these students, a car-free, safe, green path connecting their schools to each other and to the rest of the peninsula is not an amenity. It is infrastructure.

CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE

The Lowline doesn't just add green space. It puts the land to work, absorbing, filtering, and returning water to the ground before it floods the streets.



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ECONOMIC IMPACT

An independent analysis by HR&A Advisors projected the following impacts for Charleston over 20 years as a result of the Lowline: 9,090 construction jobs created. 4,620 permanent jobs supported. \$4.8 billion in total projected economic output. 500,000 estimated annual visitors, including 125,000 tourists new to the Charleston market, generating \$8.2 million in incremental annual visitor spending.

Research on the fastest-growing companies in the country found that one in five leaders named parks and quality-of-life factors as a primary criterion for choosing where to locate. The Lowline positions Charleston to compete for that investment.

PROJECTED 20-YEAR ECONOMIC IMPACT — HR&A ADVISORS

9,090

construction jobs

One-time job-years created during build-out

4,620

permanent jobs

Ongoing positions supported by operations and development

\$4.8B

total economic output

Projected over 20 years including real estate and tourism

500K

annual visitors

Including 125,000 tourists new to the Charleston market

Research on the fastest-growing companies in the country found that one in five leaders named parks and quality-of-life factors as a primary criterion for choosing where to locate. The Lowline positions Charleston to compete for that investment.

Source: HR&A Advisors Economic Impact Analysis

Construction is underway. Opening in 2027. The question now is what we build together.

Courtney Olson, Executive Director

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