

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Broadway Bridge Goes Green Underneath**

DURHAM, N.C. (October 11, 2010) — The Portland Streetcar Loop Project is extending the existing Portland Streetcar by 3.3 miles. If you use the Broadway Bridge, you may have noticed, or perhaps been frustrated by, reduced lane closures and detours. But by 2012, the first modern streetcar system in the country is expected to be in full operation. What's more, it will be "green" in a place you wouldn't think to look: The bridge deck installed with the streetcar rails on the movable spans of the Broadway Bridge is made of composite material rather than steel or concrete.

What? A bridge deck made of plastics?

Welcome to the reality of 21st century civil engineering. Fiber reinforced polymer (FRP), or composite, bridge decks represent a hidden environmental beauty. They have a life cycle of 75-100 years, are corrosion resistant, offer superior strength, and are low maintenance. In comparison, concrete and steel decks require ongoing and expensive maintenance and are more vulnerable to cold weather and corrosion, according to Dan Richards, president and chief executive officer of ZellComp, Inc., and designer of the composite bridge deck recently installed with the street car rails on the Broadway Bridge.

"Composites are not as new as you may think," said Richards. "FRP materials have long been used in the aerospace and defense industries, and you'll see them used in thousands of products, ranging from cars and boats to golf clubs and bulletproof vests."

"This is a strong, lightweight material, easy to install and should be here and still performing well for decades to come," said Joe Hampton of Hamilton Construction, which installed the bridge deck.

"Our number one concern in installing this bridge deck is the safety of drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and streetcar passengers on the Broadway Bridge," said Dan Richards. "It's essential to preserve this historic landmark, and that includes ensuring its structural integrity. Our decks have been independently tested to demonstrate they far exceed safety standards required of steel and concrete decks. An FRP bridge deck meets desired goals of using green construction materials as well as ensuring that bridges we build and rehabilitate today will last for future generations."

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the country's infrastructure crisis. A 2009 report by the American Society of Civil Engineers estimated that more than 26% of the 600,000 bridges in the U.S. are either structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. On October 11, President Obama repeated his call for a \$50 billion bipartisan plan to upgrade the nation's crumbling infrastructure.

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