



South Carolina Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTED
JANUARY 2026

SCDOT OFFICE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key transportation strategies identified in South Carolina Department of Transportation's (SCDOT) Strategic Plan focus on asset management while developing multimodal options for all residents and visitors, including public transportation. SCDOT's Office of Public Transit (OPT), in coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and local and regional partners throughout the state, plans, programs, and administers the statewide delivery of rural and urban general public transit services and transit services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Pursuant to SC Code of Law, Sections 57-3-40 and 57-3-210, the OPT is required to develop and submit the annual Office of Public Transit Report to the General Assembly. Included within the Report is an analysis of (1) annual accomplishments and progress, (2) a funding plan and (3) a five-year transit plan.

SECTION 1: ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Public transit is a core component of South Carolina's multimodal transportation network. Most counties in South Carolina have public transit service in at least a portion of their county. In SFY2024-2025 (July 1 – June 30), South Carolina's general public and human service transit service providers operated approximately 601 vehicles, reporting that they provided **8,590,140 one-way general public passenger trips and 1,827,860 one-way specialized human service trips for elderly and people with disabilities.**

Establishing, financing, and sustaining effective, statewide, publicly operated transit service in urban and rural areas continues to be a major challenge, while at the same time one of our biggest accomplishments.

Below are a few highlights from 2025:

- In April 2020, SCDOT made available to the rural transit providers the first round of CARES Act funding, which was roughly equivalent to their total annual federal

allocation. A second round of funding was released in October 2020, with the final round released in October 2021. As of December 2025, **97.8% of the fully allocated CARES Act funding** for rural transit agencies had been invoiced and paid out. SCDOT continues to work with the State's Executive Budget Office and Office of the State Auditor to ensure compliance with the evolving processes of documentation and proper oversight of the Federal CARES Act funding. OPT intends to close out CARES Act funding during the 2026 calendar year.

- In October 2023, OPT was reorganized in an effort to adopt more efficient processes in the administration of FTA programs and funding. During 2025, **OPT continued integrating processes within the guidelines of SCDOT policies and procedures.** The new organizational structure utilizes a regional approach that also allows for collaboration with other SCDOT divisional subject matter experts to support OPTs **mission to implement and administer transit programs effectively and efficiently.** Significant milestones related to transit program management include implementing an improved oversight and compliance review process, improved coordination of drug and alcohol oversight and monitoring procedures and processes for transit providers, and improved process related to procurement of services and tangible assets.
- In 2023 SCDOT was awarded a **discretionary FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Program Funds (Section 5339) in the amount of \$15, 423,904** for rural transit provider vehicle replacements. Applications have been received and are under review. It is anticipated that funded projects will be awarded during 2026 and 2007. These funds will facilitate the replacement of aging vehicles and introduce new vehicles into a significantly worn rural public transit fleet across the state. The resulting fleet modernization will improve system reliability, safety, and accessibility while directly advancing South Carolina's overall state of good repair objectives.
- OPT contracted with a third party vendor to serve as subject matter experts in updating the State's **Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan.** This effort is focused on developing a clearer and more accurate snapshot of South Carolina's public transit and human service vehicle assets. The updated TAM Plan will include an improved inventory of vehicles and equipment, a statewide fleet condition assessment, and enhanced performance measures to better support

decision-making related to capital investment and state of good repair.

- In addition to asset planning and updating activities, OPT is leveraging third-party expertise to support federal compliance and procurement oversight. A third-party firm will be brought on board to conduct **Buy America audits**, ensuring compliance with federal requirements across applicable federally funded procurements. The Buy America Audit activities will directly support the ongoing statewide ADA vehicle procurement requirements through review and audit potential vendors' vehicles for Buy America compliance prior to award and vehicle purchase.
- During 2025, OPT continued advancing a more data-driven and comprehensive approach to transit asset management across South Carolina. Recognizing the age and condition of much of the state's public transit and human service vehicle fleet, OPT engaged third-party subject matter experts to strengthen asset visibility, compliance, and long-term planning.
- In November 2025, OPT selected a commercial off the shelf grants and financial management system that will improve OPT program management and financial accountability. The selected vendor (B2Gnow/BlackCat) has been providing secure, hosted grant and data management solutions to state government agencies across the country since 1994 – 30+ years.
- SCDOT continued to facilitate interagency and transportation coordination efforts, with the ultimate goals to **enhance economic development efforts, reduce overall public and human services transportation costs, and maintain or enhance the delivery of transit services** across the state in a fiscally sustainable manner. Milestones include increased coordination between public transit agencies and regional Councils of Governments (COGs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and greater transparency in funds programming in the local Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) and SCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

- SCDOT OPT continues to manage **the day-to-day engineering** of South Carolina’s largest transit project, the **Lowcountry Bus Rapid Transit (LCRT)**. The LCRT is a modern bus rapid transit system that will connect the Charleston region, its communities, key destinations and employment centers. This project will transform the region by improving transportation through providing by bus, while expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the corridor. The foundation of the LCRT will serve Charleston, North Charleston and Ladson, and spark upward mobility and economic growth through the area. Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) is the project sponsor for the LCRT with funding provided by the FTA’s Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program, a discretionary and competitive federal grant program and Charleston County sales tax. The LCRT is currently in the engineering phase. Right of way acquisition began in 2024 and construction is due to begin in 2027.

SECTION II: FUNDING PLAN

South Carolina was apportioned \$83,515,762 in FTA funds Federal Fiscal Year 2025. Federal funds administered directly by SCDOT are matched with \$6.0 million in State Mass Transit Funding (SMTF). The SCDOT Commission approves the Transit Funding Plan on an annual basis. Transit funding allocations are included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Transit funding is referenced in Section III of this report and is located at <https://www.scdot.org/inside/planning-stip.aspx>.

SECTION III: FIVE-YEAR PLAN

SCDOT recognizes that South Carolina’s transportation system is essential to the economic health of our State. SCDOT uses two plans to address transit across the state - STIP and the 2050 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP).

The STIP is SCDOTs six-year transportation improvement program for all projects or program areas receiving federal funding. The STIP covers all federally funded

improvements with approved funding. SCDOT expects to begin these projects in the next six-year period and is revised on a continual basis to reflect the latest program and project information. The SCDOT Commission, as well as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FTA, approve the STIP. The STIP is a fiscally constrained plan based on financial budgets phased over the life of a project. This document is located at <https://www.scdot.org/inside/planning-stip.aspx>. .

Momentum 2050 is SCDOT's twenty-five year SMTP. Momentum 2050, managed by SCDOT's Office of Planning, builds upon the previous 2040 SMTP. This new plan incorporates public outreach and stakeholder involvement efforts, an updated vision, new goals and objectives, environmental and cultural resource documentation, and a new plan for emerging technologies. Additionally, it leverages recent data analytics to assess performance-based needs and develop investment strategies. The culmination of these efforts is presented in Momentum 2050. Momentum 2050 offers long-term guidance for the development of transportation programs and establishes strategies to achieve South Carolina's transportation goals over a 25-year period. The SMTP is updated every five years to reflect the latest information on travel and growth trends, goals and objectives, infrastructure conditions, future deficiencies, and estimated funding.

During 2025, OPT issued a Request for Proposals to complete a **Statewide Transit Plan** (STP). Momentum 2050 will be the foundational document to prepare a plan that establishes a coordinated vision for public transit across the state, addressing current needs and future challenges. The STP will commence development in 2026 and create a modern, comprehensive and strategic transit roadmap.