

January 24, 2023

Honorable Lawrence K. "Larry" Grooms, Chairman
Senate Transportation Committee
203 Gressette Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Honorable Shannon S. Erickson, Chairman
House Education & Public Works Committee
429 Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

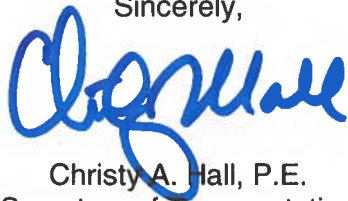
Re: 2022 Public Transit Annual Report

Dear Chairmen:

On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) please accept the Agency's submittal for the "Office of Public Transit Annual Report" for 2022. Pursuant to SC Code of Law, Sections 57-3-40 (C) and 57-3-210 (B) (2), the Office of Public Transit is required to provide this report to the Committee Chairmen of House Education & Public Works and Senate Transportation. Included within the Report is an analysis of annual accomplishments and progress, a funding plan and a five-year transit plan.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Christy A. Hall, P.E.
Secretary of Transportation

CAH:dwf
Enclosure





OFFICE OF PUBLIC
TRANSIT

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTED
JANUARY 2023

SCDOT OFFICE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key transportation strategies identified in the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT's) 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 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 SC have public transit service in at least a portion of their county, which typically translates into over 12 million passenger trips statewide annually. However, due to the residual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on South Carolina's public transit service, in 2022 6.6 million passenger trips were provided.

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. This is especially true given the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on South Carolina's public transit services in 2022.

Below are a few highlights from 2022:

- In 2020, the Federal CARES Act included \$25 billion in funding nationally to support the transit industry response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) **apportioned a total of \$120 million to South Carolina**, with \$75.2 million going to large and small urban transit systems and \$44.8 million going to rural transit systems. The CARES Act funding represented a significant increase and is in addition to normal annual federal transit funding. **Funding was provided at a 100-percent federal share** for all 27 public transit systems in the state, with no local match required. CARES Act funding continues to be used to reimburse FTA recipients for actual capital, operating, planning and administration expenses to

respond to COVID-19 impacts and all funding remains available until expended. Funding is also used to maintain operations and personnel and offset revenue loss due to decreased ridership, cancelled contracts or temporary reductions in service.

- 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 2022, **79.3% 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.
- The federal **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)** was signed into law on November 15, 2021. The act included provisions related to federal-aid highway, transit, highway safety, motor carrier, and rail programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and provided an **additional 25.6 percent** in federal transit funding to South Carolina.
- The South Carolina Office of the State Auditor conducted an annual review of the Office of Public Transit to ensure that OPT was sufficiently and appropriately performing its auditing and compliance responsibilities as required by state statute. The Office of the State Auditor found **no exceptions or findings** as a result of this review.
- SCDOT has continued the success of the **Statewide Transit Asset Management Program**. Through innovative financing methods, OPT is maximizing the use of this program with a capital asset replacement plan that has significantly reduced the number of current SCDOT-titled public transit vehicles past their useful life. Since inception of this initiative the percentage of transit vehicles operating past their useful life has continued to decrease, **allowing SCDOT to remain below our current target of 40 percent**. This figure also represents a continued reduction from the initial 77 percent of transit vehicles operating past their useful life in 2014, **demonstrating the success** of the statewide transit asset management program.
- SCDOT continues to **increase efficiency and customer service** while reducing administrative burdens for OPT and local and regional transit agencies through automation of some of our processes. In 2022 OPT continued to maintain and enhance the **Transit Asset Management and Information System (TAMIS)**, which automates and streamlines transit asset management, performance management, and administrative and fiscal management of federal funding contracts and transit subrecipient agreements. The effect is a streamlining of activities that allows OPT and local and regional transit agencies to operate with far greater efficiency and transparency.
- SCDOT continued the **Technical Assistance and Oversight Program** to ensure that the scope and associated costs of transit services are commensurate with available and projected revenues. Because of increased technical assistance, we have seen a reduction in findings resulting from annual compliance reviews of local transit agencies, and a

continued “right-sizing” of transit services statewide to better ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.

- SCDOT continued to facilitate interagency and public-private 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.
- SCDOT continued efforts with local officials in multiple counties to introduce general public **transit services for the first time**, and continued to forge **public-private partnerships** for the implementation of employment-focused public transportation services statewide **in support of the local economic development efforts**. Counties for which transit service was introduced or in development included Abbeville, Cherokee, Greenwood and Union counties.

SECTION II: FUNDING PLAN

The SCDOT Commission approves the Transit Funding Plan containing both state and federal transit funds. The attached chart displays the \$6.0 million in state transit funding and \$59.644 million in federal transit funding as approved by the SCDOT Commission. Additional information can be found in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, also known as the STIP. It is referenced in Section III of this report and can also be located at: <https://www.scdot.org/inside/planning-stip.aspx>.

SECTION III: FIVE-YEAR PLAN

SCDOT recognizes that the SC transportation system is essential to the economic health of our State. SCDOT uses two plans to address transit across the state - the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and the 2040 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP). These plans are explained below.

The STIP is our 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 Federal Transit Administration (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>.

The 2040 SMTP is the state’s twenty-five year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. The SMTP, including the Statewide Transit Plan, is updated every five years with intermittent annual reviews. It focuses on maximizing South Carolina’s limited funding resources, maintaining the state’s position in the global marketplace, and efficiently moving both people and goods. This plan was developed in conjunction with SCDOT management, staff, and

transportation partners and stakeholders. The process included several major components that encompass public transportation, including:

- **Statewide Public Transportation Plan Update** – overall public transportation plan for the state of South Carolina, summarizing existing services, needs and future funding programs.
- **Multimodal Transportation Plan** – overall plan inclusive of all modes of transportation.

The current 2040 MTP Update was approved in July 2020 and is located at:
<https://www.scdot.org/Multimodal/default.aspx>.

FFY2022 Public Transit Funding Plan \$74.97 Million Federal/\$6.0 Million State

(Figures below are in thousands)

