

2017 Rail Plan Implementation Update January 2018

- SCDOT is South Carolina’s “State Rail Transportation Authority” as defined by the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The South Carolina Statewide Rail Plan (SRP) was approved by the SCDOT Commission as part of the South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan on December 4, 2014. SCDOT ensures that the SRP documents the state’s policy on freight and passenger rail transportation within the State’s boundaries, establishes priorities and implementation strategies to enhance rail service in the public interest, and serves as the basis for Federal and State rail investment. The SRP was approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on April 13, 2015. SCDOT continues to work on implementation of the SRP to enhance the overall passenger and freight rail services in South Carolina
- Operations for shortline railroads remained largely the same in 2017. Office of Railroads staff remained involved in planning activities related to rail access to a number of new facilities under construction, including Inland Port Dillon, the new Volvo manufacturing facility, and the Palmetto Railways’ proposed Intermodal Container Transfer Facility for dual rail access to the new Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr. Terminal under construction in North Charleston.
- SCDOT, through our Office of Railroads, reviewed FRA Safety Grants for our Short Line Railroads for infrastructure improvement projects, and continues to analyze the needs of our short line railroads for potential application for competitive federal rail funding.
- The Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP), developed through a tri-state coordinated effort of Georgia DOT, NCDOT and SCDOT, with Georgia DOT leading the effort and SCDOT a non-funding partner, is 90% completed with full completion anticipated by the end of 2018. The PRCIP, including a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is an extension of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) that is under development from Charlotte to Washington, D.C. The extension from Charlotte would travel through South Carolina to Atlanta.
- FRA selected the Southeast region for a fully-funded, USDOT-led, Southeast Multi-State *Rail Planning* Study in July 2015. This effort continues and will facilitate coordination with neighboring states and will assist with funding for freight and passenger rail projects in the Southeast. SCDOT serves as a member of the project Steering Committee, and participated in all quarterly meeting in 2017. The anticipated completion date for the Plan is the second quarter of 2018
- SCDOT continues to participate in a leadership role in the Southeast Rail Forum that is planning its 2nd meeting in March 2018. This is a regional forum of FRA, six Southeastern states, and numerous rail stakeholders. The purpose of the forum is to bring attention to the economic benefits of freight and passenger rail and efforts made among states to coordinate a collective vision for rail transportation in the Southeast. This bi-annual meeting is scheduled for March 27-28, 2018 in Greenville, SC.

