



OFFICE OF PUBLIC  
TRANSIT

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2016 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTED  
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# SCDOT OFFICE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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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, in partnership with the federal government and local communities throughout the state, plans programs, and administers the statewide delivery of rural and urban 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 Office of Public Transit 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.

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## SECTION 1: ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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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 translates into over 12 million passenger trips statewide annually. 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 2016:

- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted their triennial **State Management Review** of SCDOT in July 2016. Although not an official audit according to generally accepted auditing standards, the State Management Review is FTA's formal assessment of SCDOT's oversight and Federal compliance in areas of project, program and financial management across all funding programs. The State Management Review focused specifically on SCDOT's oversight and compliance in 13 defined areas, and no deficiencies or findings were identified by FTA in any of the areas reviewed.

FTA conducts triennial reviews of all state DOT's, and this is the second straight Federal review for which SCDOT has come through with no deficiencies or findings. The Federal review team stated that few states have no deficiencies, and fewer states still have no deficiencies for multiple reviews in a row.

- The Office of the State Auditor conducted an **annual audit** of the Office of Public Transit (OPT) in August 2016, during which no findings were issued. This continues the multi-year trend of federal, state and internal audits and reviews in which SCDOT's OPT has had **no audit findings at any level**. The Office of Public Transit also met its internal goal of completing on-site reviews of eight public transit agencies, providing opportunity for sub-

recipient agencies to receive technical assistance, while ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations. These reviews also assess the financial, managerial and technical capacities of the agencies.

- During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2016, over 12 million passenger trips were provided for the fifth year in a row, with **ridership of 12.3 million** in SFY 2016. According to annual transit trends analyses, this represents a 3.6% increase in transit ridership since SFY 2011, which combined with a 0.6% decrease in average operating cost per passenger trip over this same timeframe indicates **enhanced overall transit efficiencies**.
- SCDOT continues to **increase efficiency and customer service** while reducing administrative burdens for the Office of Public Transit and local and regional transit agencies through automation of some of our processes. The Office of Public Transit continued the implementation of its **Transit Asset Management and Information System (TAMIS)**. This system automates and enhances transit asset management, and administrative and fiscal management of federal funding contracts and transit subrecipient agreements. The effect is a streamlining of activities that allow the Office of Public Transit and local and regional transit agencies to operate with far greater efficiency and transparency. Core components include:
  - Transit Asset Management System to track and monitor transit asset conditions and optimize replacement of public transit vehicles;
  - Grants Management System that will allow local transit agency submittal of funding applications and management of their projects online, and electronic SCDOT award and oversight of subrecipient contracts and projects;
  - VTE-Form – (Virtual Transit Enterprise) an electronic invoicing system that has replaced the former paper-based invoicing system for our local transit partners;
  - Performance Management System that will allow for ongoing review and assessment of individual and statewide transit performance and enhanced reporting of statewide transit performance through our public website.
- SCDOT continued the recently-implemented **Statewide Transit Vehicle Replacement Program** based on the results of the Statewide Vehicle Utilization Review and Assessment completed in 2015. Through innovative financing the Office of Public Transit was able to fully match carry-forward Federal formula funding unable to be drawn down due to a lack of local match, along with other funding resources. We are maximizing the use of this program with a capital asset replacement plan that will significantly reduce the number of current SCDOT-titled public transit vehicles past their useful life. This initiative resulted in a 7 percent reduction from the previous year of transit vehicles operating past their useful life.
- SCDOT continued the **Technical Assistance and Oversight Program** with all public transit agencies in the state to ensure that the scope and associated costs of transit services are commensurate with available and projected revenues. This has resulted in an ongoing “right-sizing” of transit services statewide to better ensure long-term fiscal sustainability, which benefits ridership through increased efficiencies.
- SCDOT continued to facilitate interagency transportation coordination efforts, consistent with the results of the SCDOT-led **Human Services Transportation Infrastructure Review**. The ultimate goal of this effort is to reduce overall public and human services transportation costs in a manner that maintains or enhances the delivery of transit services across agencies, while reducing the fiscal impact to the state as a whole.

- Doing its part in promoting cleaner air and fueling alternatives in its service area, Clemson Area Transit was awarded \$4 million in competitive funding under a federal program that funds transit buses with zero emissions or low emissions. The purchase builds on the successful deployment of zero-emission transit service in South Carolina and will allow Clemson Area Transit to continue towards their goal of being the only university in the country served by an all-electric transit fleet.
- The Santee-Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA) also introduced five new cutaway buses powered by propane, and plans to eventually convert its fleet of 42 buses and vans to run on the alternative fuel. SWRTA's newest buses were funded through a \$950,000 federal grant with matching funds from SCDOT's Office of Public Transit. The system provides public transportation in Sumter, Clarendon, Lee and Kershaw Counties and furnishes about 300,000 trips per year. Demonstrating the merits of public-private partnership, Palmetto Gas, as a partner with SWRTA, has propane fueling facilities in Sumter and Clarendon Counties.

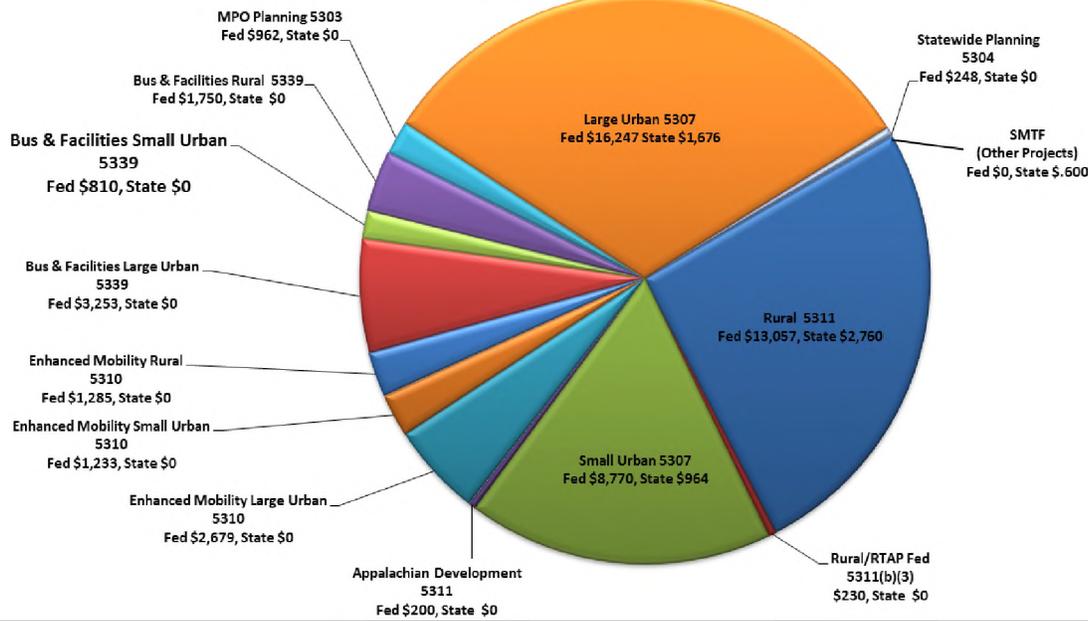
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## SECTION II: FUNDING PLAN

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The SCDOT Commission annually reviews and approves the Annual Transit Funding Plan containing both state and federal transit funds. The charts below display the \$6 million in state transit funding and \$50.7 million in federal transit funding as approved by the SCDOT Commission for SFY 2017. 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: <http://www.scdot.org/inside/stip.aspx>.

**SFY2017 Public Transit Funding Plan**  
**\$50.724 Million Federal/\$6.0 Million State**  
**(Figures below are in thousands)**



CATEGORY	FEDERAL DOLLARS	STATE DOLLARS
Large Urban 5307	\$16,247,000	\$ 1,362,000
Statewide Planning	\$ 248,000	\$ 0
Rural 5311	\$13,057,000	\$ 2,760,000
Rural/RTAP	\$ 230,000	\$ 0
Small Urban 5307	\$ 8,770,000	\$1,278,000
Appalachian Development	\$ 200,000	\$ 0
Enhanced Mobility Large	\$ 2,679,000	\$ 0
Enhanced Mobility Small	\$ 1,233,000	\$ 0
Enhanced Mobility Rural	\$ 1,285,000	\$ 0
Bus & Facilities Large Urban	\$ 3,253,000	\$ 0
Bus & Facilities Small Urban	\$ 810,000	\$ 0
Bus & Facilities Rural	\$ 1,750,000	\$ 0
MPO Planning	\$ 962,000	\$ 0
State Administration/Other	\$0	\$600,000

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### SECTION III: FIVE-YEAR PLAN

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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 the state's six-year transportation improvement program for all projects or program areas receiving federal funding. The document is updated every three years 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: <http://www.scdot.org/inside/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:

- **10 Regional Transit and Coordination Plan Updates** – transit plans developed for each of the 10 Council of Government regions.
- **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 2040 MTP, located at <http://www.scdot.org/Multimodal>, was approved in December 2014.