



OFFICE OF PUBLIC
TRANSIT

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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SCDOT OFFICE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

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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, 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.

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 translates into over 12.8 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 2015:

- The Office of the State Auditor conducted an **annual audit** of the Office of Public Transit (OPT) in August 2015, 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) 2015, over 12 million passenger trips were provided for the third year in a row, including **record ridership of 12.8 million** in SFY 2015. This represents a 6.6% increase over SFY 2014, and the five-year trend analysis shows an 8% increase in transit ridership since SFY 2011. Average operating costs of \$4.84 per passenger trip represents a minimal 0.2% increase over SFY 2014, while the five-year trend analysis shows a 7.1% decrease in average operating cost per passenger trip since SFY 2011, **indicative of overall enhanced 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. SCDOT **developed and implemented a Transit Asset Management and Information System (TAMIS)** with the following core components:
 - 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 implemented a **Statewide Transit Vehicle Replacement Program** based on the results of the Statewide Vehicle Utilization Review and Assessment completed in March 2015. This assessment determined transit agencies’ actual asset needs based on optimized service levels, and we were able to identify limited federal funding through an innovative initiative that allows us to fully match carry-forward Federal formula funding that was unable to be drawn down due to lack of local match. 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.

- Over the past year SCDOT has continued innovative initiatives and modified existing programs that were aimed at lessening the impact of fiscal difficulties many transit providers were facing. SCDOT continued efforts with a number of public transit agencies to **develop Financial Recovery and Sustainability Plans**. In doing so, our state’s public transit providers have become more fiscally sustainable, addressed budget shortfalls while new fiscal management processes were implemented, and maximized the drawdown of available federal transit funding.

- 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.

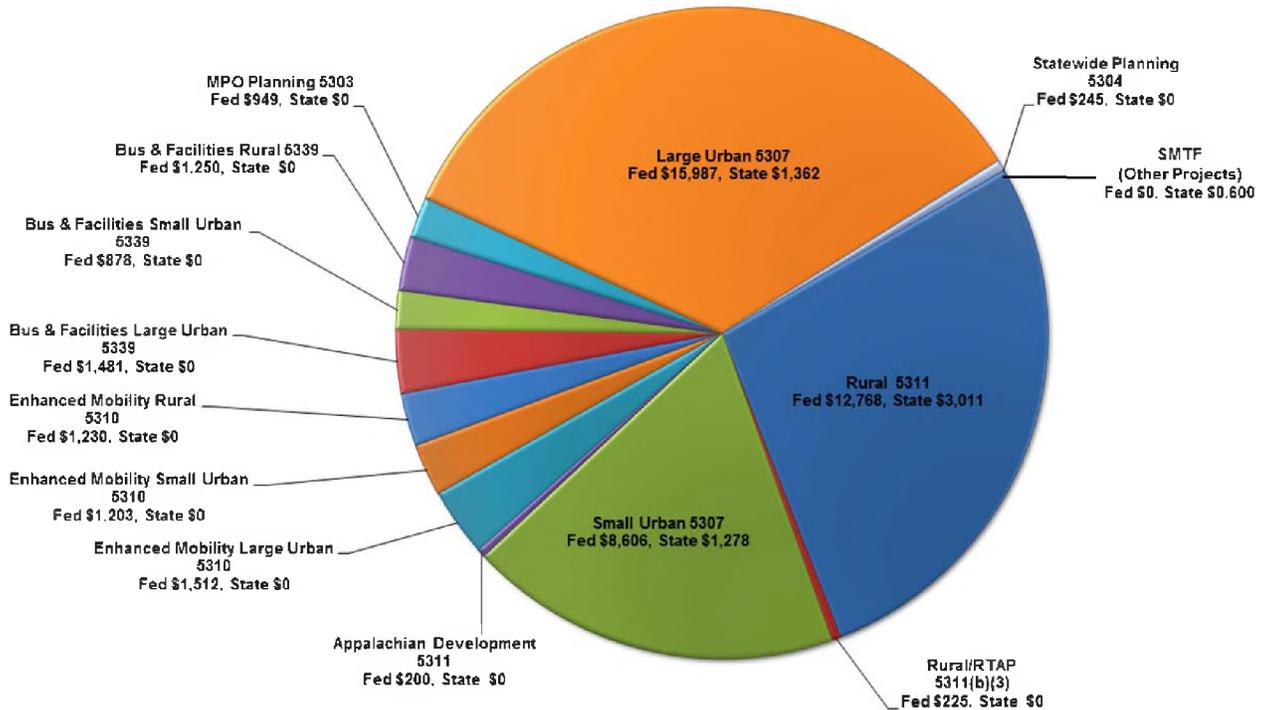
- SCDOT led an effort, through the SC Interagency Transportation Coordination Council, that resulted in completion of an interagency **Human Services Transportation Infrastructure Review** that identified a model for more effective and cost-efficient transportation coordination for SC. The ultimate goal 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.

- Within existing resource limitations, SCDOT committed to and provided program and administrative planning support for **statewide regional coordination activities** through each Council of Governments, with an emphasis on enhancing regional transit coordination effectiveness, efficiency and local communication of public transit goals, objectives and initiatives.
- Under the auspices of the SCDOT Statewide Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture Plan update (February 2015), we assessed current technology utilized by public transit providers and **were able to identify gaps and opportunities for improving technology** placement to support both traveling public information needs, as well as enhance transit agencies' day-to-day operational effectiveness.

SECTION II: FUNDING PLAN

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 \$46.5 million in federal transit funding as approved by the SCDOT Commission for SFY 2016. 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>.

SFY2016 Public Transit Funding Plan
\$46.525 Million Federal/\$6.0 Million State
(Figures below are in thousands)



CATEGORY	FEDERAL DOLLARS	STATE DOLLARS
Large Urban 5307	\$15,987,000	\$ 1,362,000
Statewide Planning	\$ 245,000	\$ 0
Rural	\$12,768,000	\$ 3,011,000
Rural/RTAP	\$ 225,000	\$ 0
Small Urban 5307	\$ 8,606,000	\$1,278,000
Appalachian Development	\$ 200,000	\$ 0
Enhanced Mobility Large	\$ 1,512,000	\$ 0
Enhanced Mobility Small	\$ 1,203,000	\$ 0
Enhanced Mobility Rural	\$ 1,230,000	\$ 0
Bus & Facilities Large Urban	\$ 1,481,000	\$ 0
Bus & Facilities Small Urban	\$ 878,000	\$ 0
Bus & Facilities Rural	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 0
MPO Planning	\$ 949,000	\$ 0

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 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.