



South Carolina
Department of Transportation

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Secretary of Transportation
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January 25, 2021

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

Honorable, Merita "Rita" Allison, Chairman
House Education & Public Works Committee
429 Blatt Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Re: 2020 Rail Plan Report

Dear Chairmen:

On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) please accept the Agency's submittal for the "Rail Plan Report" for 2020. Pursuant to SC Code of Law, Sections 57-3-30 (A) (5), the Office of Railroads – an office within the Division of Intermodal and Freight Programs at SCDOT- prepares this report for the Senate Transportation and House Education & Public Works committees.

The Rail Plan Report provides an analysis of the South Carolina Statewide Rail Plan (SRP) in two parts: (a) state railroad corridor preservation and revitalization plan; and (b) the comprehensive state rail plan for passenger and freight railroads and infrastructure services. To address these requirements, the SRP and the Rail Plan Implementation Update are enclosed.

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

Sincerely,

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

CAH/dwf





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2020 Rail Plan Implementation Update January 2021

- **SCDOT is South Carolina’s “State Rail Transportation Authority”** as defined by the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The updated South Carolina Statewide Rail Plan (SRP) was approved by the SCDOT Commission in July 2020 and was reviewed and approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in November 2020. 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. SCDOT (along with other statewide public, private and local entities) continues to pursue implementation of the SRP goals and objectives to enhance the overall passenger and freight rail services in South Carolina.
- As part of the **Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP)**, the FRA and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) continued to finalize a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the extension of the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor from Charlotte, North Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia. The vision of the SEHSR Corridor is to develop an integrated passenger rail transportation solution for the Southeast, including proposed high-speed rail from Washington, DC through Richmond, VA and Charlotte and Raleigh, NC, and from Charlotte to Atlanta, Georgia via the Upstate region of South Carolina.
- SCDOT continued to participate in the multi-state **Southeast Rail Forum** which will hold its third forum in March 2021 (virtual). The purpose of this forum is to bring focus to the efforts made by the Southeastern States (District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama) to unify their visions for the role of rail in the region through a multi-state Compact agreement and the Federally-led regional study for the Southeast Rail Corridor; highlight the economic benefits of a coordinated approach to regional rail planning; identify the role of trends and activities in intermodal freight transportation: Rail, Ports, Trucking, and Shipping Hubs and share examples where co-mingled passenger and freight services can work.
- The **Southeast Corridor Rail Commission** with representation from the lead states involved in the Southeast Regional Rail Plan was established in November 2019. The purpose of the Commission is to prioritize and advance near-term projects across the region and develop a visionary multi-state investment strategy for a long-term regional rail network. FRA has initiated a second phase of this study. In March 2020, a webinar was held to update the Stakeholder Planning Groups on existing conditions, findings from the CONNECT modeling and recommended network. Southeast states have continued to work cooperatively on various reports and study technical memoranda and remain in communication on the status of various programs and projects through workshops, forums, and monthly/quarterly conference calls.
- In 2019, SCDOT (on behalf of Norfolk Southern (NS) and the South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA)) was awarded \$25 million through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation discretionary grant (2018) program. A \$51.1 million project, the **Upstate Express Corridor Capacity Expansion Project (UPEX)** will make freight rail infrastructure improvements in South Carolina through expansion of Inland Port Greer (IPG), and expanded track and siding within the rail corridor for more efficient rail movements. The IPG expansion will add inland intermodal transportation capacity to accommodate the ongoing and projected economic growth in the state. Both NS and SCPA initiated design and construction activities for the project components. The project is estimated to be completed in Fall 2023.

