

# TRANSPORTATION

## OVERVIEW

The Transportation Element provides an analysis of transportation systems serving the County including existing and proposed roads and pedestrian and bicycle facilities and projects.

The relationship between transportation and land use is an important concept in both land use and transportation planning. The most significant role that transportation plays in land development is in providing access. Conversely, effective transportation systems significantly impact where and how land is developed. Transportation facilities are a significant element of the built environment, creating both connections and barriers. Traffic congestion on a thoroughfare can also be a barrier, causing motorists to seek alternative routes. An understanding of these relationships is critical to solving and even preventing transportation related problems such as congestion, energy consumption and conservation, air quality, public health and safety, and access to services and employment.

Debate on the relationship between transportation and land use typically hinges on whether the transportation network should be planned to accommodate anticipated land uses and growth or should the transportation network evolve organically to accommodate traffic generated by the location of land uses and subsequent growth patterns. Ideally, transportation networks should be planned to anticipate and accommodate future needs but the reality is that most often funding for infrastructure, particularly at the local level, is so limited that transportation resources are directed where needed most urgently – to address immediate problems such as congestion and safety issues that are caused by increased traffic volume. Even the best planned transportation system cannot address every possible future development scenario or advances in technology. It is important that both transportation and land use plans evolve over time, adjusting to new challenges and opportunities in concert with one another.

### Road Network

According to the South Carolina Comprehensive Multimodal Long Range Transportation Plan, demand for travel in the State is growing at a pace that is approximately twice as fast as population growth. This growth in travel has far outpaced the rate of expansion of the South Carolina highway system. While travel is greatest on Interstates, Federal and State highways and many local roads have also experienced the traffic congestion and road deterioration associated with increased motor vehicle travel. An examination of the local road network will enable Laurens County and regional partners to plan for transportation needs for the coming decade, particularly as they relate to future land use.

### Local Road Funding

#### C-Funds

The State of South Carolina launched its “C Program” in 1946 for the purpose of paving dirt farm-to-market roads in the State system. Program funds, known as C-Funds, are derived from a 2.66 cent per gallon user tax on gasoline sales that are deposited in the County Transportation Fund and allocated to the counties. As part of the program, each county has a County Transportation Committee (CTC) with its members appointed by the County legislative delegation. The Committee has the authority to decide

which transportation projects will be constructed or improved with C-Funds. The CTC is empowered with the authority to select and approve projects to be funded utilizing C-Funds.

C-Funds may be used for construction, improvements, or maintenance on the State highway system; local paving or improvements to county roads; street and traffic signs; and other road and bridge projects. Resurfacing, sidewalk construction, and drainage improvements may also be accomplished with C-Funds. By law, counties must spend at least 25 percent of their apportionment of C-Funds on construction, improvements and maintenance related to the state highway system, with the remaining 75 percent available for projects related to the local transportation system.

#### Road Naming

Road naming or renaming requests from developers or interested parties in Laurens County must be submitted to the Planning Commission for approval. Proposed road names must not duplicate or be similar to existing street names in the County.

#### Functional Road Classification

Streets and roads serve two primary functions – to provide mobility and facilitate access to land. Optimally, the transportation network balances these two functions. On higher capacity roads such as interstates mobility is the primary function, while the primary function of local roads is access to residences. Between these two extremes, the level of mobility and access to land varies depending on the function of the network. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines functional classification as the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Because most travel involves movement through a network of roads, it is necessary to determine how travel can be channelized within the road network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of the channelization process by defining the part that any particular road should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network. Transportation planners and engineers classify roads based on FHWA and State criteria that include the type of road and traffic volume. The functional classification of a road or road segment may change over time because of factors such as changes in land use, land development, and road widening. Streets and highways are grouped by the following categories:

Freeways (Interstates) – multi-lane divided roadways with full control of vehicular access. Freeways operate under the purest form of uninterrupted flow, with no fixed elements such as traffic signals to interrupt the traffic flow.

Arterials – provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control.

- Principal Arterials – consist of a connected network of continuous routes that serve corridor movements having trip length and travel density characteristics indicative of substantial statewide or interstate travel. Principal arterials serve a high percentage of the area population and provide an integrated network without stub connections except where unusual geographic or traffic flow

conditions dictate otherwise, such as an existing road that has been divided by a manmade lake or interstate highway.

- Minor Arterials – in conjunction with principal arterials, form a network linking cities and larger towns and form an integrated network providing interstate and intercounty service. Minor arterials include all arterials not classified as principal and constitute routes whose design should be expected to provide for relatively high overall travel speeds, with minimum interference to through movement. In more urban areas, this classification places more emphasis on land access and offers a lower level of traffic mobility.
- Collectors – provide a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials. Collectors generally serve travel primarily between counties rather than being of statewide importance and constitute those routes on which, regardless of traffic volume, predominant travel distances are shorter than on arterial routes. Consequently, more moderate speeds may be typical, on average. In rural areas collectors provide service to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems and to other traffic generators of importance within the county such as schools, parks, and major industries – linking these places with nearby towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification. Principal collectors serve the more important travel corridors within the county. In urban areas, the collector street system provides both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas and may penetrate residential neighborhoods, distributing trips from arterial roads and collecting traffic from local streets.
- Local Roads – primarily provide access to adjacent land and road systems of higher classification and travel over relatively short distances as compared to collectors. The local street system comprises all facilities not assigned a higher classification and offers the lowest level of mobility.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>General Location</u>
Interstate	I-26	North and East of Clinton
Interstate	I-385	Fountain Inn to Clinton
Principal Arterial	Hwy 72	Lake Greenwood to Newberry County
Principal Arterial	US 221	Enoree to Lake Greenwood
Principal Arterial	US 76	Laurens to Clinton
Principal Arterial	US 25	Ware Shoals to Princeton
Minor Arterial	Road 67	Fountain Inn to Spartanburg County
Minor Arterial	Hwy 49	Laurens to Cross Anchor
Minor Arterial	Hwy 252	Laurens to Ware Shoals
Minor Arterial	Hwy 56	Newberry County to Spartanburg County
Minor Arterial	Hwy 76	Laurens to Princeton

## **Transportation Planning**

### **Statewide Planning**

In June 2007, the Department of Transportation Reform Bill (Act 114) was signed into State law. Act 114 gives direct control over the top three levels of the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to the Governor, enables the Governor to appoint a Secretary of Transportation, and provides stringent criteria for the ranking of State Road projects within the context of a state transportation plan. In addition

to creating an at-will Director appointed by the Governor, the legislation is intended to encourage sound infrastructure investments by requiring that these decisions be made within the context of the statewide transportation planning process. Specifically, Act 114 requires SCDOT to establish a priority list of projects to be undertaken through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and in consultation with metropolitan planning organizations using the following criteria:

1. Financial viability including a life cycle analysis of estimated maintenance and repair costs over the expected life of the project;
2. Public safety;
3. Potential for economic development;
4. Traffic volume and congestion;
5. Truck traffic;
6. Pavement quality index;
7. Environmental impact;
8. Alternative transportation solutions; and
9. Consistency with local land use plans.

Planning for sound infrastructure is also a primary goal of the South Carolina Priority Investment Act of 2007. The Priority Investment Act amends Section 6-29-1130 of the South Carolina Code of Laws and requires that local government comprehensive plans include a Transportation Element. Previously, transportation issues were addressed in the Community Facilities Element. The Act requires that the Transportation Element be developed in coordination with the Land Use element to ensure transportation efficiency for existing and planned development. The Act also requires comprehensive plans to include a Priority Investment Element, which must include an analysis of likely Federal, State and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities, including transportation systems. The Priority Investment Element must also recommend projects for expenditure of these funds over the next ten years, with recommendations coordinated with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

#### Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the agreed-upon multi-year list of specific projects for which federal funds are anticipated. Required by federal and state law, the TIP represents the transportation improvement priorities of the Upper Savannah Council of Governments region. The list of projects is multi-modal and includes maintenance and resurfacing projects, intersection and signalization improvements, corridor improvements to minimize incidents, system and widening upgrades, transit alternatives, as well as bicycle, pedestrian, and freight-related projects. The projects proposed by the TIP for each COG or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) are evaluated and incorporated into the State TIP by the SCDOT Commission.

The USCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a short-range program that addresses projects to be funded within the next six years. Projects are first included in the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and, based on priorities established in the LRTP, are moved into the TIP as funding becomes available. A project cannot appear in the TIP unless it is first included in the LRTP. Projects included in the

TIP are typically funded over several years, with funding allocated to the preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction phases.

#### Transportation Alternatives Program

The USCOG TIP also includes other federally funded non-vehicular roadway projects allocated through the US Department of Transportation's Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) Transportation Alternative Program (TAP). MAP-21 allocates all federally funded surface transportation programs and creates a streamlined and performance-based surface transportation program. TAP, formerly known as Transportation Enhancements, was created to help expand non-motorized transportation choices and provide funding for activities that are often excluded from transportation projects. TAP is a federal grant program that provides funding on a reimbursement basis. Costs are only eligible for reimbursement after a project has been approved by the SC Department of Transportation or Metropolitan Planning Organization and the FHWA division office. Eligible costs include preliminary and final engineering work such as project development, environmental work, cost estimates, construction plans, utility relocations, construction engineering, construction costs, and right-of-way acquisition. Transportation Alternatives funds generally account for 80% of the total project cost, with local governments required to provide a 20% match. However, SCDOT encourages matching funds in excess of the minimum 20% required under federal guidelines. While a cash match is encouraged, SCDOT may allow the use of in-kind matching resources such as the donation of services, labor, materials, and equipment.

Eligible activities under the Transportation Alternatives Program include:

- Pedestrian Facilities and Bicycle Facilities, including non-motorized paths, that connect and develop regional or statewide non-motorized transportation networks, benefit state tourism or economic development initiatives, and address documented safety deficiencies.
- Streetscaping Improvements that are in established traditional downtowns or historic districts and use a creative design approach to accomplish multiple goals, including pedestrian safety.
- Safe Routes to School Program activities that meet the requirements set under SAFETEA- LU. Available funding from SCDOT for the Program is provided in three population-based divisions.

#### Maintenance Responsibilities and Ownership

The responsibility for the maintenance of roads and their associated features (shoulders, drainage structures, sidewalks, and landscape) is dependent upon ownership. It should be noted that many of the older roads in the County were built prior to current design and dedication practices. Because public funds have been expended for maintenance of these roads over the years and the public has used these roads without objection, they have become County roads by right of adverse possession.

The width of a road right-of-way (the width inclusive of the car path and any additional ancillary property used for shoulders or sidewalks) varies from road to road. The minimum required by the LDR is typically 50 feet, however the minimum width increases as the projected traffic volume increases. The requirements of the Land Development Regulations are based on nationally recognized engineering standards, most commonly AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials). Because owning the appropriate right-of-way width enables the County to more effectively maintain and/or enhance County roads, an ongoing program to acquire additional right-of-way to supplement

deficient widths is carried out on an as-needed basis. As the County undertakes improvement projects within established rights-of-way, every effort is made to acquire additional widths. When land is subdivided or developed, the Land Development Regulations require the owners of land adjacent to these rights-of-way to provide additional easements to the Town to address the issue.



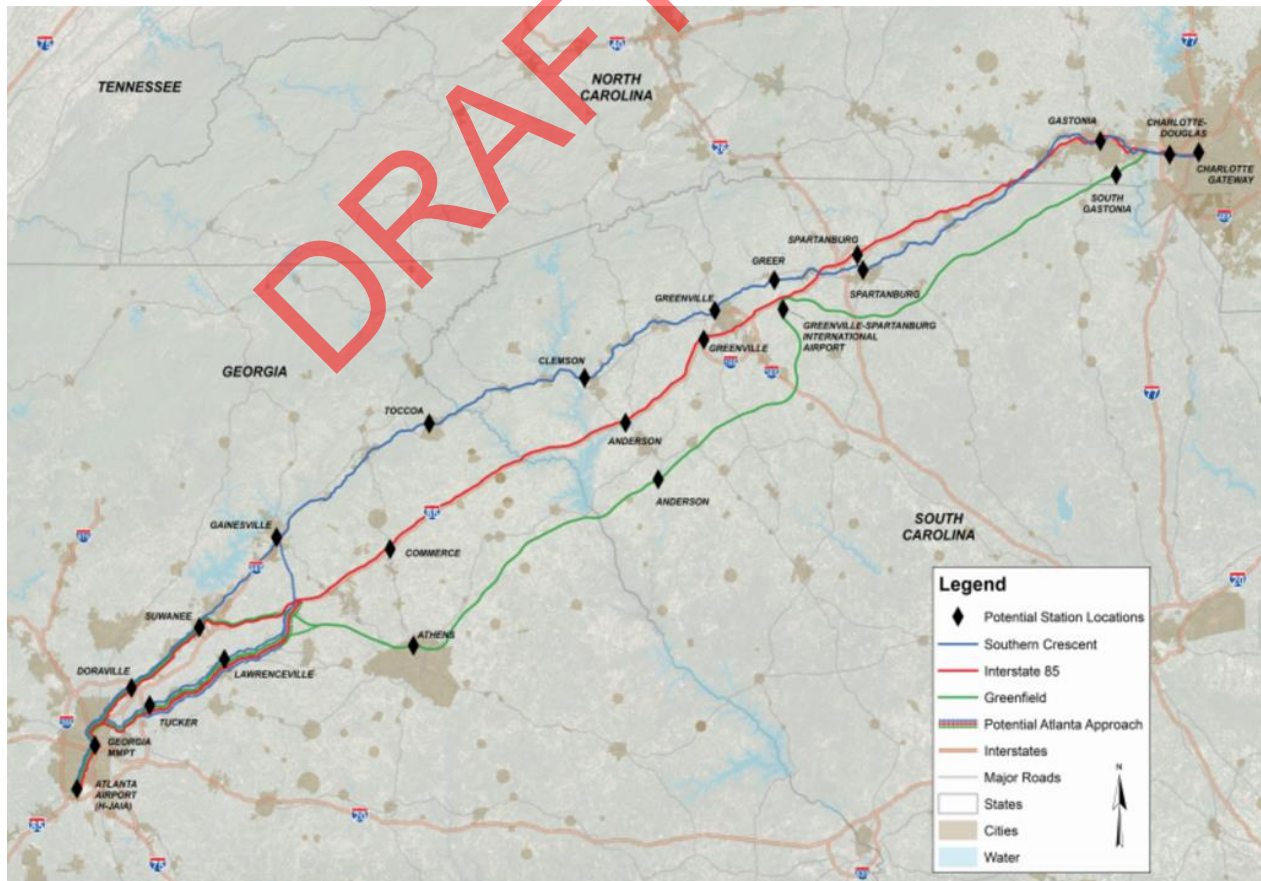
## Rail Service

Rail transportation in Laurens County is provided by CSX Transportation. Providing service to both the City of Laurens and Clinton. The Carolina Piedmont Division, South Carolina Central Railroad, operates a 34.4-mile short line parallel to I-385 between Greenville and Laurens. Regular review of these crossings is provided by the railroad companies as SCDOT.

## High Speed Rail

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), has completed a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for the proposed Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to help determine future transportation investments of vital importance to all people who live, work, and travel in the Atlanta to Charlotte corridor. The Atlanta to Charlotte corridor is an integral extension of the Southeast High-Speed Rail (SEHSR) corridor, as designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The SEHSR corridor will ultimately provide important connectivity between Atlanta and Washington, DC, and on to the Northeast Corridor to Boston, MA. As a Tier I document, exact track locations have not been determined; instead, FRA analyzed corridor alignments in this document. Funding to build this part of the SEHSR has not yet been fully identified.

The exact alignments and routes for the termini of the alternatives have not yet been finalized and will be further defined in a future Tier II EIS; however, each of the alternatives will include service to downtown and airport stations in both Atlanta, GA, and Charlotte, NC. In particular, the project will consider connectivity between a downtown Atlanta passenger station and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Atlanta, and between the proposed Charlotte Gateway Station and Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.



## Airport

The Laurens County Airport, located midway between Laurens and Clinton, has a single 3,900 linear foot paved and lighted runway. Used by both private and corporate aircraft, the facility includes tie downs, hangers, and a new terminal building. Services include a full-service avionics shop and is a port-of-entry for importers and exporters. The Airport Commission maintains a strategic plan for the maintenance and improvement of the airport. The primary goals are to maximize revenues and minimize operating expenditures, while providing facilities to accommodate the flying public.

Basic needs consist of:

- Obtaining a better "Airport Reference Code" (ARC)
- Serving aircraft with a larger wingspan "Aircraft Designed Group" [ADG)
- Expanding the runway length
- Maximizing the taxiways
- Security Fencing
- Pavement strength
- Airfield lighting and navigational aids
- Automated weather observing system
- Terminal building and facilities
- Aircraft parking
- Automobile parking
- Fuel facilities





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Examine the potential for protecting scenic beauty and improving safety without compromising safety.
- Require development to pay its fair share of the costs resulting from increased transportation facility demands.
- Encourage limited access management along County roads and discourage strip development.
- Decrease the need for automobile trips by providing opportunities for mixed use developments, pedestrian access, and shared-use facilities.
- Maintain transportation models of the Interstate 385 and Interstate 26 corridors.
- Request that the South Carolina Department of Transportation conduct a preliminary engineering study identifying specific improvements needed along Interstate 385 for additional on/off ramp improvements.
- Work with SCDOT to increase street sweeping on all state roads and increase enforcement of littering and dumping of trash in roadways.
- Continue to financially support the implementation of the Swamp Rabbit Trail and other shared-use path networks.
- Conduct corridor master plans for performance corridors.
- Support a *Safe Routes to School* Program with the help of the Laurens County School Districts.



Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame	Completion Date
<b>Goal. To provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the County.</b>			
Plan roadway development to support and enhance the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Use Plan.	County Council	Ongoing	
Maintain and improve existing transportation facilities to meet increased demand.	County Council	Ongoing	
Work with SCDOT to gain rights- of-way access, encourage limited access management and determine the best adjacent land use to prevent the extension of urban sprawl and discourage strip development.	County Council Planning	Short Term	
Install sidewalks on all existing and future Town roads.	County Council Planning	Long Term	
Apply for SCDOT Transportation Alternative Program funds to improve the existing transportation system and to provide alternative transportation modes such as biking and hiking trails.	County Council COG	Short Term	
Require new development and redevelopment projects to pay for road improvements associated with the (re)development. Implement traffic impact analysis requirements for new (re)development projects?	County Council Planning	Short Term	
Work with SCDOT to increase street sweeping on all state roads and increase enforcement of littering and dumping of trash in roadways.	Planning SCDOT	Short Term	
Consistently enforce the “rules of the road” for cyclists and motorists.	Police	Short Term	
Continue to financially support the implementation of the Swamp Rabbit Trail	County Council Planning	Short Term	
Continue to encourage and invest in alternate modes of transportation on major corridors including bicycles, pedestrians, and public transportation to reduce the use of single-	County Council USCOG SCDOT	Mid Term	

driver motorized vehicles.			
Increase enforcement of traffic laws (speed and stopping at stop signs) through neighborhoods.	Police	Short Term	
Implement a <i>Safe Routes to School</i> Program with the help of the Laurens County School District.	County Council Administration Planning School District	Short Term	
Conduct corridor master plans along priority routes along the Growth Management Area to identify streetscape, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, scenic views, and reduction of conflict zones.	Planning USCOG	Short Term	
Cooperate with FHWA, SCDOT, and others to evaluate the impact of the proposed high-speed rail.	County Council Planning	Ongoing	
Work with transportation engineers and public safety departments to design and implement methods to discourage cut-through traffic through neighborhoods while increasing connectivity.	Planning	Short Term	

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