

Planning

- Many people believe that SCDOT alone controls the selection of all projects. This is far from the truth. SCDOT's main responsibility is to manage, not select, projects.
- Projects may be initiated by: Congress, the General Assembly, Regional Councils of Government (COG's), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), local government, the SCDOT Commission, or private developers.
- State law pledges sufficient funds to meet the requirements of the federal program, therefore SCDOT must defer to federal authority when projects are established by federal law.
- Federal law requires each state to establish a fiscally constrained Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The SCDOT Commission has established a policy of seeking recommendations from the COG's and MPO's for projects to be included in the STIP. This policy was made law in June 2007.
- State law requires SCDOT to develop a statewide priority list of projects based on financial viability, safety, economic development, traffic congestion, freight traffic, pavement quality, environmental impacts, alternative solutions, and local land use plans. This priority list must be consulted when establishing the STIP.
- Before any project in the STIP can move forward to construction, federal law requires that it must undergo extensive review by the environmental resource agencies, local governments, various cultural review agencies, and the general public. Hearings and public comment periods are required by law.
- SCDOT is proactive in its efforts to protect the environment while looking for fiscally conservative ways to complete all projects. Besides engineering concerns, the plans for each project must consider environmental mitigation, national security, safety, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and consistency with planned growth and development plans.

Environmental Stewardship

SCDOT is committed to protecting and sustaining the natural and human environment:

- Last year, SCDOT recycled more than 400 tons of metal, 107 tons of used motor oil, 51 tons of grass clippings and debris, 110,000 tons of concrete, and 113,000 tons of milled asphalt.
- SCDOT has been recognized for recycling paper, plastic, aluminum, and glass. The Agency was awarded the 2004 DHEC Outstanding State Agency Waste Reduction/Recycling Program award.
- The Department coordinates the statewide Adopt-a-Highway Program. Since the program began, more than 30 million pounds of trash have been collected.
- SCDOT is the state's leading user of alternative vehicle fuels such as flexfuel and biodiesel.
- The Agency has reduced hazardous waste production at its facilities by 90% in 6 years.
- SCDOT has partnered with the Garden Clubs of South Carolina to promote the sale of Keep South Carolina Beautiful license tags. The proceeds are used to plant native wildflowers along the state's highways.
- SCDOT is using innovative landscape techniques such as perforated paving blocks and Silva Cells to promote plant growth and reduce sediment runoff from the state's highways.
- The Department automatically considers bicycle and pedestrian facilities when designing new highway projects.
- SCDOT received the 2006 South Carolina Historic Preservation Award for its efforts in preserving the Fish Dam Ford battlefield.
- Rather than mitigating wetland losses in a piecemeal fashion, SCDOT purchased Sandy Island, in the Waccamaw River delta, to serve as a 17,000 acre mitigation bank for numerous highway projects. This approach has been used in Kershaw, Beaufort, and Newberry Counties as well.
- SCDOT has partnered with PalmettoPride and the SC Department of Corrections to establish corporate sponsorships for 2 mile sections of Interstate where inmates are used to collect litter at no cost to the state.



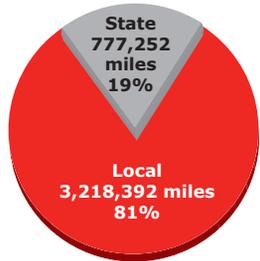
Understanding Highway Policy in South Carolina



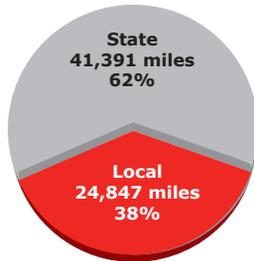
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State vs. Local Ownership of Highways

National System



South Carolina

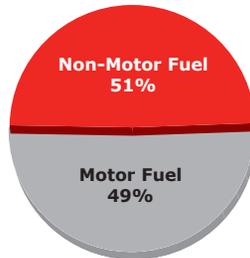


- Every state in the nation has a highway agency. These agencies have varying degrees of responsibility for the construction and maintenance of public highways.
- Nationally, 19% of all public roads are state owned. County or municipal government locally owns the other 81% of roads in America.
- In 1994, a cap was placed on the number of secondary road miles in the S. C. state system. By then, the state already had a much larger system than other states.
- 62% of South Carolina's roads are the responsibility of the state, leaving only 38% under local control. This means that SCDOT is responsible for three times the national average of state-maintained highways.
- This is not necessarily a bad thing. Since most roads are the state's responsibility, overhead costs are lower and highway design is uniform. These advantages assume, however, that funding will follow responsibility. This is not the case in South Carolina. We have low funding and high responsibility.
- The SC General Assembly sets highway policy and state funding. The SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT) is responsible for administering highway construction and maintenance programs statewide.

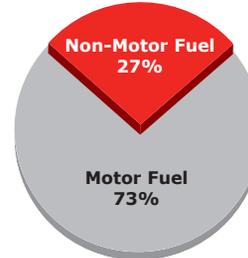
Motor Fuel User Fee

- Highway taxes are called "user fees" because they are paid by citizens for use of the highways. Despite South Carolina's high level of responsibility, fees paid by each SC citizen are among the lowest in the nation.
- The motor fuel user fee is collected at the rate of 16 cents per gallon. The only way to increase revenues is to consume more fuel (i.e., have more cars on the highways). This puts a greater strain on roads, requiring more maintenance and more construction.
- The motor fuel user fee in South Carolina has not been increased or adjusted for inflation since 1987. It does not grow with the price of fuel.
- Across the southeastern region, 51% of state source highway funding is derived from sources other than fuel user fees. Examples of dedicated revenues include sales tax on vehicles and general sales taxes. Many states also supplement their highway programs with General Fund revenues; in South Carolina, only 27% comes from non-fuel sources.

National System



South Carolina



Safety

- Three people die on South Carolina roads every day.
- About 85% of all crashes occur on primary and secondary roads, not on interstates.
- Narrow, two-lane highways are statistically the most dangerous highways in America. Safety on these roads can be enhanced through engineering design improvements and proper maintenance. However, in South Carolina, the lack of funds limits how much SCDOT is able to do.

Road Conditions

- Nearly one-third of South Carolina's primary and interstate highways are now in poor or mediocre condition.
- Approximately half of the state's secondary roads are in poor or mediocre condition.
- One out of every five bridges in the state is considered deficient.

Federal Funds

- Federal funds are limited in how they can be used. They cannot be used for routine maintenance and must be used on roads that contribute significantly toward interstate commerce.
- Federal Funds that are dedicated to Enhancements (e.g. streetscaping and beautification) may not be used for other purposes.
- Approximately 24,000 miles of state roads are NOT eligible for federal funds and must be funded solely with state dollars.
- Funding levels are set by Congress based on formulas. Federal funds are not an "all you can eat buffet."
- Each state is required to "match" federal highway funds with state or local funds. As highway projects are completed, SCDOT must pay all expenses then seek reimbursement from the Federal Highway Administration.
- When matching increased federal funding, less money becomes available for South Carolina's highway maintenance budget.

Efficiency

- SCDOT is a good steward of revenues. An independent study published by the Reason Foundation ranks SCDOT second in the nation for overall cost effectiveness.
- SCDOT has one of the lowest administrative costs in the nation.
- SCDOT has fewer employees per mile of road than any other state DOT.