

2016 Rail Plan Implementation Update January 2017

- SCDOT is South Carolina’s “State Rail Transportation Authority” as defined by the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The South Carolina Statewide Rail Plan (SRP) was approved by the SCDOT Commission as part of the South Carolina Multimodal Transportation Plan on December 4, 2014. 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. The SRP was approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on April 13, 2015. SCDOT continues to work on implementation of the SRP to enhance the overall passenger and freight rail services in South Carolina
- The Carolina Southern Rail Line in the Conway area was purchased by R.J. Corman Railroad Group after having been out of service for many months. Repairs and upgrades were made to the corridor and were completed in late spring of 2016. R.J. Corman’s rail lines were significantly impacted by Hurricane Mathew in October 2016, and they only recently returned to full service.
- SCDOT, through our Office of Railroads, applied for FRA Safety Grants for two Class III Short Line Railroads for infrastructure improvement projects in late 2015. While we were not successful for either of the identified projects in 2016, SCDOT continues to analyze the needs of our shortline railroads and will continue our efforts in applying for competitive federal rail funding.
- The Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP), developed through a tri-state coordinated effort of Georgia DOT, NCDOT and SCDOT, with Georgia DOT leading the effort and SCDOT a non-funding partner, is 85% completed with full completion anticipated in early 2018. The PRCIP, including a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is an extension of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) that is under development from Charlotte to Washington, D.C. The extension from Charlotte would travel through South Carolina to Atlanta.
- FRA selected the Southeast region for a fully-funded, USDOT-led, Southeast Multi-State *Rail Planning* Study in July 2015. This effort continues and will facilitate coordination with neighboring states and will assist with funding for freight and passenger rail projects in the Southeast. SCDOT serves as a member of the project Steering Committee, and hosted the first meeting for the Southeast Regional Rail Planning Study in Columbia in September 2016. The anticipated completion date for the Plan is late 2017.
- SCDOT also participated in a leadership role in the Southeast Rail Forum that was held in Charlotte in March 2016. A regional forum among six Southeastern states, the purpose of the meeting was to bring focus to the economic benefits of freight and passenger rail in the region and efforts made by the southeastern states to coordinate their collective vision for rail transportation in the Southeast.

