

2021-2027

**Rural Transportation Improvement
Program**

Lowcountry Council of Governments

Adopted on September 24, 2020

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List of Acronyms

COG	Council of Government
FAST ACT	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems
JARC	Job Access/Reverse Commute
LATS	Lowcountry Area Transportation Study
LCOG	Lowcountry Council of Governments
LOTTR	Level of Travel Time Reliability
LRTA	Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MAP-21	Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PPP	Public Participation Plan
RPWP	Rural Planning Work Program
RTIP	Rural Transportation Improvement Program
SCDOT	South Carolina Department of Transportation
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TAMP	Transportation Asset Management Plan
TAP	Transportation Alternative Program
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
UPWP	Unified Planning Work Program
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
UZA	Urbanized Area
V/C	Volume to Capacity Ratio (a measurement of roadway congestion)

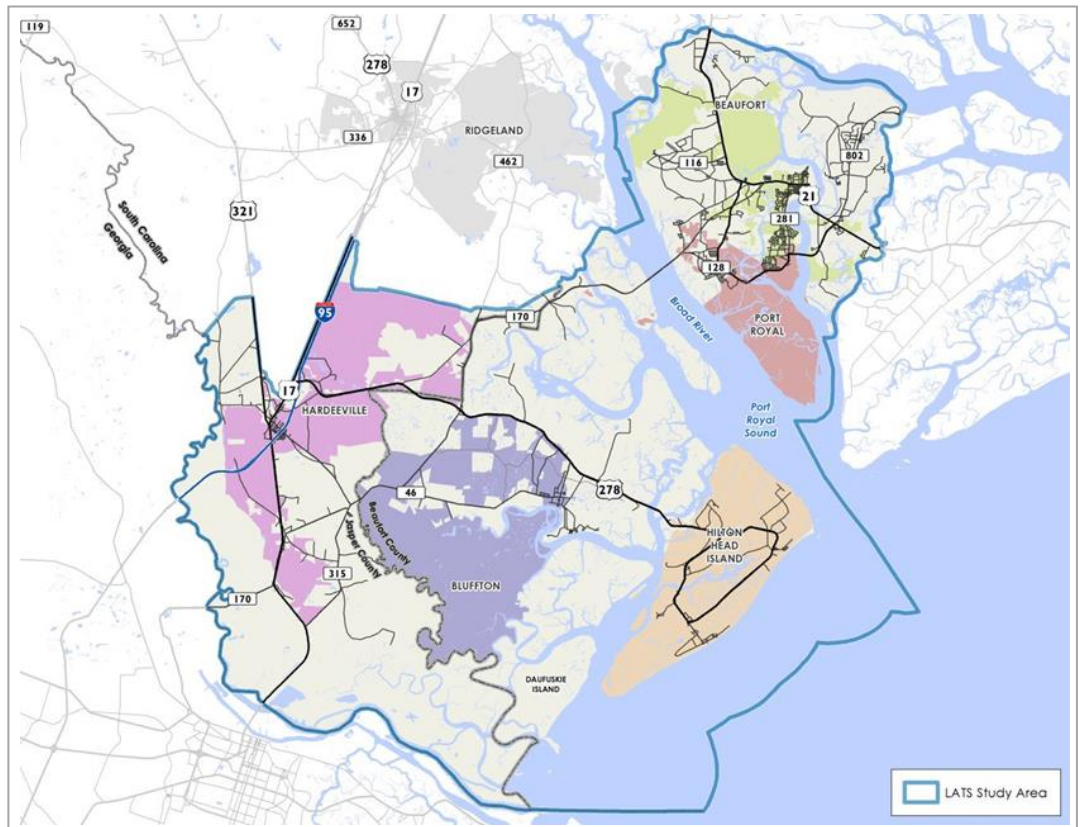
Introduction and Background

Purpose of the Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) The Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is a staged, multi-year program of projects proposed for funding by federal, State, and local sources within the Lowcountry Region of South Carolina. The 2021- 2027 RTIP identifies roadway and transit projects programmed for construction within the next seven years. The 2021-2027 RTIP was developed by the Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) in cooperation with local governments, the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and local transportation agencies. The RTIP is developed in accordance with the metropolitan planning requirements set forth in the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule (23 CFR Part 450, 49 CFR Part 613) reaffirmed by the most recent transportation bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The 2021-2027 RTIP was prepared under guidelines set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations (referenced above).

Metropolitan Planning Organization

On March 27, 2012, the US Census published the list of 2010 Urbanized Areas (UZA) and reported the Beaufort/Hilton Head Island area urbanized population as 68,998. Federal regulations require the designation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to provide continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning for areas with an urbanized population of 50,000 or more. As a result, the Lowcountry Area Transportation Study (LATS) was established as the MPO responsible for coordinating the transportation planning process for the urbanized areas of Beaufort and Jasper Counties in South Carolina, including the municipalities of Beaufort, Bluffton, Hardeeville, Hilton Head Island, and Port Royal. In general, the MPO area includes land designated as urban by the most recent (2010) US Census and other land expected to be urbanized within the next 20 years. The LATS area, including most of Beaufort County and the southern portion of Jasper County, represents one of the fastest growing areas in South Carolina, both leading up to 2010 and since 2010.

The primary responsibilities of any MPO are to 1) develop a Long Range Transportation Plan, which is, at a minimum, a 25- year transportation vision for the planning area; 2) develop a financially constrained



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Transportation Improvement Program, which is the agreed upon list of specific projects for which federal funds are anticipated; and 3) develop a Unified Planning Work Program, which identifies in a single document the annual transportation planning activities that are to be undertaken in support of goals, objectives and actions established in the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Councils of Government

Councils of Government in South Carolina have seen their role in regional transportation planning evolve from consulting on rural projects selected by SCDOT to a role similar to a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) where COGs follow the federal transportation planning process. COGs are required to develop their own RTIP, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP). The fundamental change in the COG role began in 1997 with a partnership between SCDOT and the ten regional COGs, which have representation from all 46 counties in the state. SCDOT created a Rural System Upgrade Program referred to as Guideshares, which includes the federal-aid construction program for the areas outside of the MPOs. Rural Guideshares were allocated by COG regions based on rural population. Initially, SCDOT prepared a list of potential transportation needs based on travel, congestion, and safety data for each region in the state. The COGs consulted with member jurisdictions and added additional needs based on feedback. In 2003, the planning process was again modified to place the burden of project identification on the COGs in the form of a LRTP. The SCDOT Commission adopted the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan in 2003 to solidify the new process for establishing statewide priorities. Today each COG has transportation functions similar to that of MPOs. Each COG, in partnership with SCDOT, is responsible for implementing a transportation planning process that fully complies with the federal planning requirements established by the FAST Act. The Lowcountry COG includes the entirety of Hampton and Colleton County and the rural portions of (not served by LATS) of Beaufort and Jasper County. The estimated 2018 population of the Lowcountry COG is 91,636.

Structure

To facilitate and encourage interaction among stakeholder groups and the local community, the LCOG uses a committee structure composed of a Policy Board and Technical Committee. The functions of these two committees are detailed below:

Policy Committee

- Contains the voting membership

**Total Population and
Population Density 2018**

	Total Population	Population Density (per square mile)
Colleton County	37,568	36
Cottageville Town	821	240
Edisto Beach Town	574	270
Lodge Town	46	15
Smoaks Town	91	56
Walterboro City	5,503	804
Williams Town	164	194
Hampton County	19,807	35
Brunson Town	471	463
Estill Town	2,856	884
Furman Town	250	80
Gifford Town	287	297
Hampton Town	2,608	578
Luray Town	173	167
Scotia Town	252	80
Varnville Town	1,877	490
Yemassee Town	985	155
Northern Beaufort County	16,173	63
Northern Jasper County	18,088	28
Ridgeland Town	3948	82
Lowcountry Rural Area	91,636	36
Lowcountry	267,933	94
SC	4,955,925	165

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-Year Estimates 2018, Total Population Table; TIGER/Line Shapefiles, Land Area

- Has final local approval and authority on all major transportation decision, policies, and programs of LCOG

Technical Committee

- Provides recommendations to the Policy Committee on technical methods, procedures, and standards that are used in the development of transportation plans and programs
- Prioritizes projects in accordance with the criteria established by SCDOT and FAST/MAP-21 requirements
- Develops funding scenarios for consideration by the Policy Committee and individual governmental entities

Membership of the Policy Committee and Technical Committee consists of representatives from the rural areas outside of the LATS boundary from Beaufort, Jasper, Hampton and Colleton County.

Federal Mandates

The FAST Act describes the requirements of the TIP in general terms. More specific requirements are contained in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613 of the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Rules. This section summarizes those requirements and describes the methods through which they are met. All roadway and transit projects to be funded under Title 23 USC—The Federal-Aid for Highways Act and Title 49 USC—The Federal Transit Act by the US Department of Transportation must be listed in the TIP. All 2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Plan projects in this document that are proposed for federal funding were initiated in a manner consistent with the federal guidelines in Section 450, Subpart C, of Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Section 613, Subpart A, of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The 2021-2027 RTIP has been developed in accordance with these requirements. Federal regulations mandate that the metropolitan transportation planning process must include development of a TIP for the metropolitan planning area by the MPO in cooperation with the state department of transportation, local governments, and public transportation authorities. As was specified in the prior section, LCOG follows the same process as a federally designated MPO and thus considers these mandates fully applicable to the COG transportation planning process.

Federal regulations require that the TIP be a product of the metropolitan planning process. LCOG implements the FAST Act through plans and programs that consider all modes of transportation, and which are “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate” [SEC. 1203(a)(4)]. In addition, the FAST Act establishes a performance-based program that provides a means to more efficient investment of Federal transportation funds by focusing on national transportation goals, increasing the accountability and transparency of the Federal highway programs, and improving transportation investment decision-making through performance-based planning and programming.

MPOs are responsible for meeting the requirements of the Joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning Rule (23 CFR part 450). The legislation requires that the metropolitan planning process must “include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans” and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) [23 CFR part 450.316(b)(1)].

Supporting Legislation

MAP-21

Adopted federal regulations provide guidance on the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), enacted in July 2012 addressed the challenges the modern transportation system faces, including safety, security, traffic congestion, intermodal connectivity, freight movement, environmental protection, and delays in project delivery. To help guide the planning process, MAP-21 set forth eight planning factors that agencies must consider when developing their plans:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, people, and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

MAP-21 also emphasized four broad focal points for transportation investment:

1. Streamlined Federal Highway transportation programs.
MAP-21 provided the majority of Federal-aid highway funds to the states through core programs. However, the core highway programs were reduced from seven to five. The Interstate Maintenance, National Highway System, and Highway Bridge program were streamlined to create a single new program, called The National Highway Performance Program. The program provided increased flexibility, while guiding state and local investments to maintain and improve the conditions and performance of the National Highway System (NHS). This eliminated the barriers between existing programs that limited states' flexibility to address the most vital needs for highways and bridges and will hold states accountable for improving outcomes and using tax dollars efficiently.
2. Established a performance-based system.
MAP-21 improves statewide and metropolitan planning processes to incorporate a more comprehensive performance-based approach to decision making. Utilizing performance targets will assist states and metropolitan areas in targeting limited resources on projects that will improve the condition and performance of their transportation assets.
3. Creates jobs and supports economic growth.
The LATS MPO will coordinate transportation projects with local governments and agencies to

improve the MPO region's global competitiveness. This will be achieved by promoting transportation corridors that improve access to the region.

4. Supports the Department of Transportation's (DOT) aggressive safety agenda.

MAP-21 builds on the successful Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP). MAP-21 substantially increases the amount of funding for this program because of the strong results it has achieved in reducing fatalities. Under HSIP, states must develop and implement a safety plan that identifies highway safety programs and a strategy to address them.

This program also replaced the Surface Transportation Program, but retained the same structure, goals and flexibility to allow states and metropolitan areas to invest in the projects that fit their unique needs and priorities.

FAST Act

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, adopted in December 2015, is the federal transportation legislation that replaces MAP-21. Through the FAST Act, federal funding will be provided for transportation programs for the next five years. The act is anticipated to continue the focus on performance-based planning established in MAP-21. Certain funding programs have been created or modified as a part of the FAST Act. For instance, Transportation Alternatives funding has been placed under the umbrella of the Surface Transportation Program (STP). A new funding category has also been created to advance major freight initiatives.

Title VI and Environmental Justice

Environmental justice has been a federal requirement since recipients of federal funds were required to certify nondiscrimination through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A 1994 Presidential Executive Order required all federal agencies to make environmental justice part of their missions. The law was enacted to avoid the use of federal funds for projects, programs, or other activities that generate disproportionate or discriminatory adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) promotes environmental justice as an integral part of the long range transportation planning process as well as individual project planning and design.

According to the USDOT, environmental justice requires the understanding and incorporation of the unique needs of distinct socioeconomic groups in order to create transportation projects that fit harmoniously within the framework of their communities without sacrificing safety or mobility. The environmental justice assessment incorporated in the LRTP is based on three fundamental principles derived from guidance issued by the USDOT:

- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.
- Ensure all potentially affected communities' full and fair participation in the transportation decision-making process.
- Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Investments made in the TIP must be consistent with federal Title VI requirements. Additionally, the process by which new projects are identified and prioritized for inclusion in the TIP must consider the equitable selection of projects in accordance with federal Title VI requirements.

Joint Federal Highway Administration/ Federal Transit Administration Planning Rule

The Joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/ Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Planning Rule (23 CFR part 450, 49 CFR part 613) also requires MPOs to conduct locally-developed public participation. This legislation requires “a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs (Transportation Improvement Programs),” including the Long Range Transportation Plan [23 CFR part 450.316(b)(1)].

Planning Efforts***Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)***

The Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG) 2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) details projects and programs that have obligated federal funding. Currently, projects incorporated in this RTIP are continuing projects and programs that originated in the Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as SCDOT-identified projects for the Lowcountry region. The 2021-2027 RTIP is the first to cover a seven-year period, rather than a four-year period, and has been developed by LCOG with the cooperation of SCDOT and LRTA. The RTIP has been advertised and made available for public comment. While the RTIP is usually approved every four years, the document may be amended throughout the year. Procedures for amending and modifying the RTIP are detailed in the next section. The RTIP may also include surface transportation projects that are being implemented by the state, city, county, or regional transit agency for which federal funding is requested, as well as regionally significant projects requiring action by the FHWA or the FTA.

RTIP Requirements

The FAST Act, along with state requirements for COGs state that a TIP comprise the following:

1. Identify transportation improvement projects recommended for advancement during the program years. The projects required are those located within the study area and receiving Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds;
2. Identify the criteria and process for prioritization for inclusion of projects in the RTIP and any changes for past RTIPs;
3. Group improvements of similar urgency and anticipated staging into appropriate staging periods; Include realistic estimates of total costs and revenue for the program period;
4. Include a discussion of how improvements recommended for the Long Range Transportation Plan and congestion model were merged into the plan;
5. List major projects from previous TIPs that were implemented and identified and major delays in planning implementation.
6. Include, to the maximum extent practicable, a description of the anticipated effect of the TIP toward achieving the performance targets identified in the long-range plan.

Financial Constraint

The RTIP must be financially constrained, meaning that the amount of funding programmed must not

exceed the amount of funding estimated to be available. In developing the 2021-2027 RTIP, LCOG has taken into consideration the transportation funding revenues anticipated during the years of the RTIP and has found the 2021-2027 RTIP to be financially constrained.

Should an action occur in the future that significantly affects the funding of programmed projects in the RTIP, LCOG along with its partners and the project sponsors would review the impact to the RTIP. Appropriate action, such as potential amendments to the RTIP, to address the funding of affected projects would be taken at that time.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

The *Lowcountry Council of Government's Long Range Transportation Plan (LCOG LRTP)* defines the community's current (or existing) strategy for creating a regional transportation system that accommodates the current mobility needs of residents and looks to the future to anticipate where new needs may arise. The *LCOG LRTP* is a financially constrained plan, meaning it identifies projects and programs that can reasonably be implemented through the plan's horizon of 25 years. In response to federal mandates and the desires of local residents, the LRTP addresses all modes of transit, including automobile, bicycle, pedestrian, transit, air, and rail movements.

The *LCOG LRTP* plan fulfills federal requirements and serves as the region's transportation vision. It seeks to characterize current and future transportation needs, outline the region's long-range transportation vision, document multi-modal transportation strategies to address needs anticipated during the course of 25 years, and identify long-term opportunities beyond the current ability to fund projects. In order to reflect changing conditions and planning principles, the plan is required to be updated every five years. Federal funding cannot be allocated to transportation projects within the MPO and COG region unless they are included in the financially-constrained plan.

Project Prioritization

To best understand how to allocate the region's limited financial resources, it is important to establish priorities for widening, new location, and intersection improvement projects. To balance priorities, project evaluations need to go beyond traffic impacts to consider cultural, environmental, economic, multimodal, and land use considerations. Recognizing the need to create a balanced prioritization to establish project rankings, South Carolina passed Act 114 in 2007, which added Sections 57-1-370 and 57-1-460 to the South Carolina Code of Laws. These sections provide details of the ranking process to be used by SCDOT as well as its affiliated MPOs and Councils of Governments (COGs).

Capital roadway projects recommended in the *LCOG LRTP* are evaluated using a priority ranking process that is required to be consistent with Act 114 guidance and SCDOT best practices. The criteria also required to reflect the needs and priorities of the COG area. The LCOG Technical Committee develops roadway project prioritization criteria in collaboration with SCDOT and FHWA.

To remain consistent with the structure of the *LCOG LRTP*, prioritization criteria are organized according to the plan's guiding principles. Projects are separated by roadway corridors and intersections/interchanges. The evaluation measures used to assess each project in the LRTP are shown here along with their potential point ranges. Data for this prioritization process was gathered from the region's travel demand model and SCDOT data sources.

The prioritization process established in the LRTP will be used as the basis for identifying future

roadway capital projects for inclusion in the RTIP. Roadway capital project prioritization was completed for this document by consulting previous prioritization efforts by LCOG.

Bicycle and pedestrian projects that are collocated with another roadway improvement were included in the roadway prioritization process. Independent bicycle and pedestrian projects were not required to be prioritized as part of the LRTP. These projects will continue to be prioritized through the identification efforts of the LCOG Committee members. If a region-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan is prepared in the future, it is anticipated that independent bicycle and pedestrian projects will be prioritized using the methodology identified in that plan.

Transit projects will continue to be prioritized through the planning efforts of the LRTA.

Capital Roadway Project Prioritization Criteria

Corridors

Congestion Mitigation

Existing V/C ratio (0 to 15)

Future V/C ratio (0 to 10)

ITS or signal system improvements (0 to 5)

Livability and Complete Streets

Consistency with local land use plans

Incorporates complete streets/ context sensitive solutions (0 or 5)

Barriers to Mobility

Public safety (0 to 15)

Hurricane evacuation (0 to 5)

Pavement quality (0 to 5)

Multimodal Integration

Existing or proposed multimodal facilities (0 or 5)

Economic Vitality and Tourism

Economic development (0 to 10)

Truck traffic (0 to 5)

Environmental Stewardship

Blend of natural, social, and cultural resources (0, 5, or 10)

Financial Viability

Project cost estimate compared with annual guideshare funding (0, 3, or 5)

Intersections/Interchanges

Congestion Mitigation

Existing V/C ratio (0 to 15)

Future V/C ratio (0 to 10)

ITS or signal system improvements (0 to 5)

Livability and Complete Streets

Consistency with local land use plans

Incorporates complete streets/ context sensitive solutions (0 or 5)

Barriers to Mobility

Public safety (0 to 30)

Hurricane evacuation (0 to 5)

Traffic status (0 to 5)

Multimodal Integration

Existing or proposed multimodal facilities (0 or 5)

Economic Vitality and Tourism

Economic development (0 to 10)

Truck traffic (0 to 5)

Environmental Stewardship

Not scored at the intersection level

Financial Viability

Project cost estimate compared with annual guideshare funding (0, 3, or 5)

Public Involvement

Public involvement associated with LCOG serves to actively solicit ideas from residents and stakeholders of the study area. Public involvement also seeks to provide meaningful ways for these residents and stakeholders to communicate with decision makers regarding the allocation of transportation funds. To better detail the role of public involvement in the preparation of key planning documents, LATS and LCOG have adopted a Public Participation Plan (PPP). Through the implementation of the PPP, residents and stakeholders have access to information as well as established ways to provide feedback.

Metropolitan and State TIPs

Just as each MPO and COG is required to develop a TIP/RTIP, each state is required to compile a Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) as a requirement of federal regulations. The STIP includes all federally funded transportation projects from throughout the state. In South Carolina, MPO TIPs and COG RTIPs are included in the STIP once approved by the relevant metropolitan planning organization (i.e. LATS in this area) and after the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) make their required financial constraint and air quality findings (as necessary). Projects must be in the STIP before funding authorities, such as FTA, FHWA, or the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) can obligate or commit monies to contracts and therefore, before sponsors can actually spend any of these funds.

RTIP Amendment Process

As mentioned above, a major update of the RTIP is typically conducted on a four-year schedule. However, during the life of the RTIP it may be necessary to update certain projects or elements. This section details the process for identifying and conducting a policy amendment or an administrative modification to the RTIP.

Policy Amendments

Policy amendments are those that:

- Add a new project to the RTIP, regardless if the project has been in a previous RTIP or not.
- Delete a programmed project from the RTIP;
- Delete or significantly change a regionally significant project feature of an existing project (for example, change the project termini);
- Delete a regionally significant project or defer it from the first four years of the RTIP;
- Change a project's funding per table on the following page;
- Could potentially be inconsistent with recommendations in the LRTP; or
- Change a project description/scope or introducing any other change that is inconsistent with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation or will alter the NEPA determination.

Major policy amendments are those that involve any changes to the policy-level recommendations in the fiscally constrained LCOG LRTP, such as:

- Changing the nature and or function of corridors and intersections;
- Adding or deleting road segments including interchange ramps; or

- Adding or deleting public transit routes, segments or transfer points.

Administrative Modifications and Corrections

Administrative modifications include all changes other than policy amendments.

These modifications usually involve:

- Shifting funds between years for an individual project or for projects within pools;
- Moving project staging between years without affecting the scope of the project,
- Affecting its expected completion within the first four years of the RTIP, or affecting the current year staging;
- Changing the federal/state/local funding source;
- Changing the designated responsible agency with the original sponsor's approval;
- Changing project funding in the first four RTIP years per table on the following page;
- Changing the program allocation to the projects per table on the following page;
- Adding new projects from unallocated money in the SCDOT budget;
- Adding new bridge replacement or rehabilitation projects with bridge funds;
- Adding new safety projects; or
- Adding new public transit projects.

RTIP Budget	Administrative Modifications and Corrections	Requiring Amendments
< \$100,000	Increase <u>less than</u> 100%	Increase 100% or greater
> \$100,000 - \$500,000	Increase <u>less than</u> \$500,000	Increase <u>greater than</u> \$500,000
> \$500,000 - \$2,000,000	Increase <u>less than</u> \$500,000	Increase greater than \$500,000
> \$2,000,000	Increase <u>less than</u> 50%	Increase <u>greater than</u> 50%

TIP Modification and Amendment Process

Processing of Revisions

Policy amendments will typically be processed monthly, dependent upon the frequency of meetings held by LCOGs Board of Directors. Policy amendments shall be processed at the very latest, quarterly. As such, Policy amendments will be submitted on an as needed basis and no later than January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 of each year. Policy amendments will be recommended by the LCOG Transportation Committee for LCOG Policy Board consideration and action. Formal public hearings will not typically be held. Public notification of the actions will be posted on the LCOG transportation planning page of the LCOG website and input will be accepted during the public comment period of any of the committee meetings considering the amendments.

Administrative modifications submitted to LCOG staff by the first working day of each month will typically be processed by the fifteenth working day of that month, provided they are complete. Processing may be delayed if additional information is required. Administrative modifications and corrections do not require committee review or approval.

LCOG staff will process RTIP revisions by:

- Entering the requested amendments and modifications into the RTIP project database;
- Notifying SCDOT of amendments and modifications for inclusion in the STIP; and
- Sending a summary of amendments and modifications to the RTIP notification list as needed.

If a sponsor submits a RTIP revision and LCOG staff denies it, the sponsor may appeal the LCOG staff decision to the Policy Board.

Funding

LCOG projects are funded through federal and state transportation funds. Several sources of funds are involved in projects that appear in the RTIP.

Guideshare Funds

LCOG projects are funded through federal and state transportation funds. Funds for road improvements are allocated by SCDOT through the Guideshare Program, otherwise known as the System Upgrade Program. The South Carolina Transportation Commission sets aside approximately \$138 million dollars of FHWA and SCDOT funds each year and distributes the money among the state's eleven MPOs and ten Councils of Governments based on population and vehicle miles of travel in each region. The Guideshare sets the annual budget for highway improvements within each MPO or COG, and total project costs in any given year normally cannot exceed the Guideshare apportionment.

Road improvements may include constructing new roads, adding traffic lanes to existing roads, constructing paved shoulders, installing traffic signals, constructing sidewalks or bike lanes, or making safety improvements. Major maintenance improvements may also be included, such as resurfacing a road. However, minor maintenance activities such as patching potholes are not funded through LCOG, but are handled directly by SCDOT maintenance units.

Due to its commitment to completely fund (with its sibling organization LATS) the widening of US 17 from SC 315 to the Georgia border, LCOG will have no Guideshare funds available until FY 2025.

Transportation Alternative Program Projects

In 2012, Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Highway Authorization Bill. The former Transportation Enhancement Program, created by earlier legislation, was rebranded as the Transportation Alternative Program, or TAP, to maintain a level of funding for projects that had frequently been left out of highway improvement plans in past years. Three specific activities are permitted for use of TAP funding by SCDOT, as detailed below. All projects must have a clear relationship to transportation, and not merely beautification or recreation. For metropolitan areas with a population less than 200,000, projects are selected by the SCDOT Commission. Transportation Alternatives funds typically require a 20% match.

For the Transportation Alternatives Program, a pedestrian is not only defined as a person traveling by foot but also “any mobility impaired person using a wheelchair.” The definition of a bicycle transportation facility is “a new or improved lane, path, or shoulder for use by bicyclists and a traffic control device, shelter, or parking facility for bicycles.” Bicycle and pedestrian projects must be “principally for transportation, rather than recreation purposes.” It must also demonstrate a logical sense of connectivity.

Additional Funding Sources

Other projects in this RTIP are programmed within the following funding categories:

1. Bridges – Funding for projects that address structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges on the federal-aid system, with a portion of the funding required for use on bridges typically not eligible for federal funding (off-system). Includes rehabilitation and replacement of bridges. Bridge Program funds typically require a 20% match. This is a Commission-approved funding category.
2. Earmark – Funding for projects that has been established through legislative authority.
3. FTA Section 5307 Capital – FTA urbanized area mass transit formula program for capital projects. FTA Section 5307 Capital funds typically require a 20% match.
4. FTA Section 5307 Operations – FTA urbanized area mass transit formula program for operating assistance. FTA Section 5307 Operations funds typically require a 50% match.
5. FTA Section 5310 – Formula grants to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options. This program supports transportation services planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities in all areas – large urbanized (over 200,000), small urbanized (50,000-200,000), and rural

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(under 50,000). Eligible projects include both traditional capital investment and nontraditional investment beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. Federal share is 80 percent for capital projects and 50 percent for operating assistance.

6. FTA Section 5311 – Formula grants for Rural Areas program provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to support public transportation in rural areas with populations of less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. The federal share is 80 percent for capital projects, 50 percent for operating assistance, and 80 percent for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) non-fixed route paratransit service.
7. Pavement/Reconstruction – Funding for resurfacing of Primary Routes (US and SC) and state secondary routes eligible for federal funding. Funding is divided between three categories of improvements including reconstruction, rehabilitation and preservation. Pavement and Reconstruction funds typically require a 20% match. This is a Commission-approved funding category.
8. Recreational Trails – Funding used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use. The RTP is administered by the South Carolina Parks Recreation and Tourism.

With each program, the proposed projects represent priority regional needs identified through the comprehensive transportation process.

2021-2027 RTIP Funding Table

The table following this narrative identifies the projects included in the 2021-2027 LCOG Rural Transportation Improvement Program. Funding for each project is shown by fiscal year as well as federal funding program. All of the projects contained within this table fall within the LCOG MPO boundary, in either Beaufort, Jasper County, Hampton or Colleton County as noted. Cost estimates for the projects shown in this table were developed in collaboration with SCDOT, and are shown in year of expenditure, thousands of dollars. Some of the projects are broken into phases, reflecting when construction, right-of-way, or preliminary engineering are expected to occur as well as the funding levels for each phase.

2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Program

Project	County	Federal Program	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	2021 - 2027 Project Cost
Guideshare											
System Upgrade											
US 17 (Georgia State Line to SC 315), Widening - LCOG Portion	Jasper	STBGP	36,185 CON								
	Guideshare Projects Subtotal		36,185								
Key PL :Planning/Feasibility PE: Engineering Design and Environmental Analysis ROW: Right-of-Way Acquisition CA: Capital AD: Administration FC: Transit Facility Construction CON: CONSTRUCTION VA: Transit Vehicle Acquisition PS: Transit Purchase of Service OP: Operations O: Other	Guideshare Allocation		2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	
	Carryforward		20,397.4	0	0	0	0	0	33.6	2,722	
	Proposed Advancement (SCDOT)		13,211.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Guideshare Program Funds		36,296.7	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,688.1	2,721.7	5,409.8	
	Debt Service		(111.7)	(111.9)	(42)	(42)	0	0	0	0	
	Payback (SCDOT)		0	(2,576.3)	(2,646.1)	(2,646.1)	(2,688.1)	(2,654.5)		0	
Amounts are shown in Thousands	Guideshare Available for Projects		36,185	0	0	0	0	33.6	2,721.7	5,409.8	
	Guideshare Allocated to Projects		(36,185)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Balance		0	0	0	0	0	33.6	2,721.7	5,409.8	

2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Program

Non-Guideshare											
Project	County	Federal Program	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	2021 - 2027 Project Cost
Bridges											
US 21 over Harbor River/ (Bridge Replacement) (Design Build)	Beaufort	STBGP	19,350 CON (ACC)								
Rock Spring Road (S-51) Bridge Replacement over Unnamed Creek (P037118)	Hampton	STBGP	3 ROW			1,902 CON					1,902
Pocotaligo Road (S-17) Bridge Replacement over Broadwater Creek (P038617)		STBGP	600 PE		25 ROW		2,000 CON				2,025
S-15-74 over Buckhead Creek in Colleton County (P029082)	Colleton	STBGP	3.05 ROW		1,495 CON						1,495
Stocks Creek Rd (S-161) Bridge Replacement over Trib to Chehaw River in Colleton County (P037131)		STBGP	800 PE		25 ROW		1,475 CON				1,500
US 17 over Edisto River (2)/ Bridge Replacements		NHP			225 RW		19,601 CON				19,826
S-15-74 over Buckhead Creek in Colleton County (V2) (P029083)		STBGP	3.05 ROW		1,487 CON						1,487
Bridge Project Subtotal			20,759.1		3,257	1,902	23,076				28,235
Safety											
US 17 (Georgia State Line to SC 315) (P0039168)	Jasper	HSP	1,000 CON								
Intersection Improvement US 15 (Jefferies Hwy)/SC 61 (Augusta Hwy) (P 039382)	Colleton	HSP	200 PE	100 ROW	2,000 CON						2,100
Median improvements/ Along Us-21(Paris Island Gateway) and SC 170 (Robert Smalls Parkway) and improvements to approaches at SC 170 and S-761 (WK Alston Drive)	Beaufort	HSP	925 C								
Safety Program Subtotal			2,125	100	2,000						2,100
Public Transit											
Lowcountry Regional Transportation Authority	Jasper Hampton Colleton	5311-R	1,339 OP								
Public Transit Subtotal			1,339								

2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Program

Project	County	Federal Program	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	2021 - 2027 Project Cost
Interstates											
Interstate Subtotal											
State Infrastructure Bank											
State Infrastructure Bank Subtotal											
Pavement/Reconstruction											
Non-FA Secondaries	Beaufort	MTN	613 CON	613 CON	613 CON	613 CON	613 CON	613 CON	613 CON	613 CON	4,291
Primary		SFP NHPP	1,527 CON	1,527 CON	1,963 CON	2,618 CON	2,618 CON	2,618 CON	2,618 CON	2,618 CON	16,580
FA Secondaries		SFP	946 CON	1,262 CON	1,767 CON	1,767 CON	1,767 CON	1,767 CON	1,767 CON	1,767 CON	11,864
Non-FA Secondaries		SFP	434 CON	434 CON	434 CON	434 CON	434 CON	434 CON	434 CON	434 CON	3,038
Non-FA Secondaries	Jasper	MTN	540 CON	540 CON	540 CON	540 CON	540 CON	540 CON	540 CON	540 CON	3,780
FA Secondaries		SFP	530 CON	706 CON	988 CON	988 CON	988 CON	988 CON	988 CON	988 CON	6,634
Primary		SFP NHPP	2,585 CON	2,585 CON	3,324 CON	4,431 CON	4,431 CON	4,431 CON	4,431 CON	4,431 CON	28,064
Non-FA Secondaries		SFP	382 CON	382 CON	382 CON	382 CON	382 CON	382 CON	382 CON	382 CON	2,674
Non-FA Secondaries	Colleton	MTN	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	1,340 CON	9,380
Primary		SFP NHPP	4,697 CON	4,697 CON	6,039 CON	8,053 CON	8,053 CON	8,053 CON	8,053 CON	8,053 CON	51,001
FA Secondaries		SFP	1,336 CON	1,781 CON	2,493 CON	2,493 CON	2,493 CON	2,493 CON	2,493 CON	2,493 CON	16,739
Non-FA Secondaries		SFP	949 CON	949 CON	949 CON	949 CON	949 CON	949 CON	949 CON	949 CON	6,643
Non-FA Secondaries	Hampton	MTN	751 CON	751 CON	751 CON	751 CON	751 CON	751 CON	751 CON	751 CON	5,257
FA Secondaries		SFP	844 CON	1,126 CON	1,576 CON	1,576 CON	1,576 CON	1,576 CON	1,576 CON	1,576 CON	10,582
Primary		SFP NHPP	2,130 CON	2,130 CON	2,738 CON	3,651 CON	3,651 CON	3,651 CON	3,651 CON	3,651 CON	23,123
Non-FA Secondaries		SFP	532 CON	532 CON	532 CON	532 CON	532 CON	532 CON	532 CON	532 CON	3,724
I-95 Resurfacing (near MM 33 to near MM 68 (NB/SB) (P027550)	Colleton Hampton Jasper	NHP		82,000 CON							82,000
Pavement/Reconstruction Subtotal			20,136	103,355	26,429	31,118	31,118	31,118	31,118	31,118	285,374
Transportation Alternatives Program											
Transportation Alternatives Program Subtotal											
Grand Total			82,669.1	103,555	33,686.0	33,020.4	54,194	31,118	31,118	31,118	317,809
Adopted on 9/24/20											

Performance Based Planning and Programming

Performance Measure 1 – Safety (PM-1)

LCOG adopted SCDOT's statewide safety targets for the 2016-2020 period for all public roads. The latest five-year average safety statistics for LCOG (2015-2019) show an average of 36.8 fatalities (1.82 fatality rate), 89 serious injuries (S.I.) (4.42 S.I. rate), and 10 non-motorized fatalities/S.I. (bicycle and pedestrian). While the LCOG average fatality rate for 2015-2019 is almost identical to the Statewide Safety target, it fairs slightly worse than the baseline. However, the 5-year S.I. rate within the LCOG area is fairly less than that of both the statewide baseline and 5-year average target.

State Performance Measures and Targets		
Performance Measures	Baseline 2014-2018 5-Year Average	2016-2020 Target 5-Year Average
Number of Fatalities	969	1,011
Fatality Rate	1.8	1.82
Number of Serious Injuries	2,962	2,781
Serious Injury Rate	5.55	4.98
Number of Non-Motorized fatalities and serious injuries	392	380

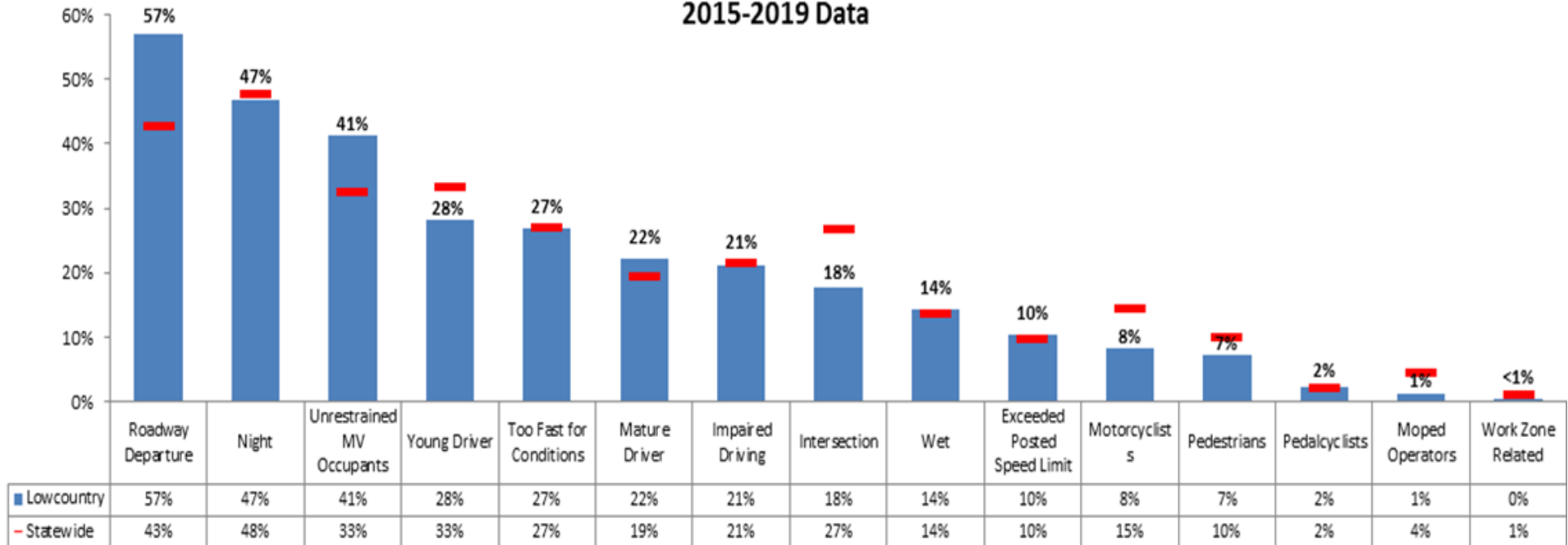
	Traffic Fatalities	Fatality Rate*	Serious Injuries	Serious Injury Rate*	Non-Motorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries
2015	39	2.02	110	5.71	6
2016	44	2.2	116	5.81	12
2017	32	1.58	83	4.09	11
2018	29	1.39	58	2.78	9
2019	40	1.91	78	3.73	12
2015-2019 Average	36.8	1.82	89.0	4.42	10.0

*Per 100 million vehicle miles of travel

Fatality Rate and Serious Injury Rate are per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
Data utilized in this review was from calendar years 2014-2019.

The top factors contributing to the aforementioned statistics within LCOG consist of Roadway Departures (57%), Night (47%), Unrestrained MV occupants (41%), Young Drivers (28%), and Too Fast for Conditions (27%). The majority of LCOGs top fatality and/or S.I. factors parallel those witnessed statewide. However, some significant discrepancies are evident such as those seen among roadway departures, unrestrained MV Occupants, as well as intersections. The graph below illustrates the top collision factors for both the state as well as the LCOG area.

**Top Factors for Fatal and Serious Injury Traffic Collisions in Lowcountry Study Area
2015-2019 Data**



524 Total F&SI Collisions

Source: SCDOT/Traffic Engineering Safety (egt); data run 07JUL20

Countermeasures that can be applied to reduce roadway departures include: paved shoulders, rumble strips, adequate clear zones, cable guardrails, enhanced signalization, pavement friction and horizontal curve improvements. These countermeasures will be encouraged on all newly programmed projects, and specifically on those projects where crash data show a high number of roadway departures and/or fixed object collisions.

At this time, there are two safety projects programed within LCOG during the 2021-2027 period. Intersection improvements to US-15 (Jefferies Hwy)/SC 61 (Augusta Hwy) as well as an I-95 corridor improvement from GA to US 278. Although LCOG fairs significantly better than the statewide data in terms of intersection collision factors, it is expected that this project will help reduce the number of collisions in the area as well as the achievement of future targets. Additionally, two other safety projects which have their construction letting dates occur within FY2020 are anticipated to positively impact future safety targets.

Performance Measure 2 – System Condition (PM-2)

Pavement Quality

Interstate targets for pavement quality are determined every four years, whereas non-interstate targets are for every two and four years. The 2018 statewide baseline for pavement condition on the non-interstate NHS system is 7.2% good condition and 4.3% poor condition. The statewide 4-year target for pavement condition on the non-interstate NHS system is 21.1% good and 4.6% poor. A table showing all of the NHS baselines and their adopted targets can be found below.

NHS Baselines and Targets				
Performance Measure		Baseline 2018	2-Year Target *2018-2019	4-Year Target 2018-2021
Interstate	Percent in Good condition	56.50%	N/A	71.00%
	Percent in Poor condition	3.10%	N/A	3.00%
Non-Interstate	Percent in Good condition	7.20%	14.90%	21.10%
	Percent in Poor condition	4.30%	4.30%	4.60%
Bridges	Percent in Good condition	41.60%	42.20%	42.70%
	Percent in Poor condition	4.50%	4.00%	6.00%

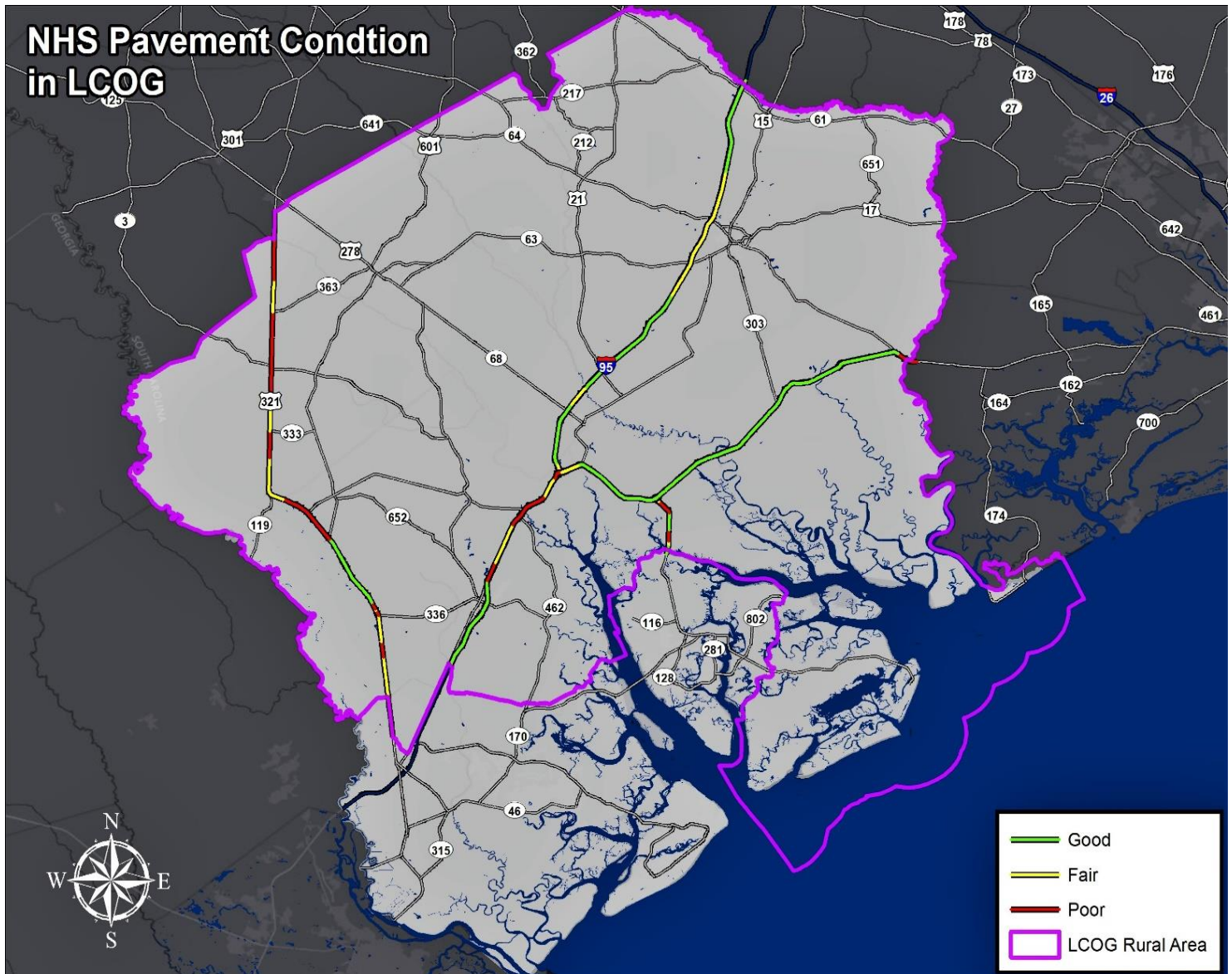
Based on data provided by SCDOT, LCOG significantly exceeds the good condition baseline for non-interstate NHS by roughly 65.8%. As such, LCOG far exceeds the Non-interstate NHS good condition two- and four-year targets as well. However, when viewing the poor condition Non-Interstate pavements, shortfalls are apparent with LCOG's pavements being almost three times worse. Significant shortcomings are even more evident within LCOG's interstate system when compared to Statewide baseline and four-year future target.

LCOG's poor interstate pavement condition is roughly two times worse than the statewide baseline and four-year target. When comparing the interstate good condition pavements, a significantly larger discrepancy can be seen. Highway pavement conditions within LCOG can be seen on the table below. It is important to note that LCOG's pavement figures are from 2019, the latest available at the time of writing.

LCOG NHS Pavement Condition	2019		Interstate	Non- Interstate NHS	Grand Total
	Good	Mileage	34.1	169.3	203.4
		Percentage	15.8%	73.0%	63.4%
	Poor	Mileage	14.4	27.1	41.5
		Percentage	6.7%	11.7%	9.9%

The map below shows the segments of NHS pavements in good, fair, and poor condition. Projects

included in the LCOG area that have a positive impact on NHS pavements include reconstruction, rehabilitation, and preservation. Presently, a resurfacing project along I-95 is programed into the 2021-2027 TIP. The project will go from MM 33 to MM 68 along I-95 and is expected to begin in FY 2021. As such, it will have no impact on the aforementioned targets, but rather its positive impacts will contribute to the achievement of future targets. A map illustrating NHS pavement conditions within the LATS boundaries can be found below.



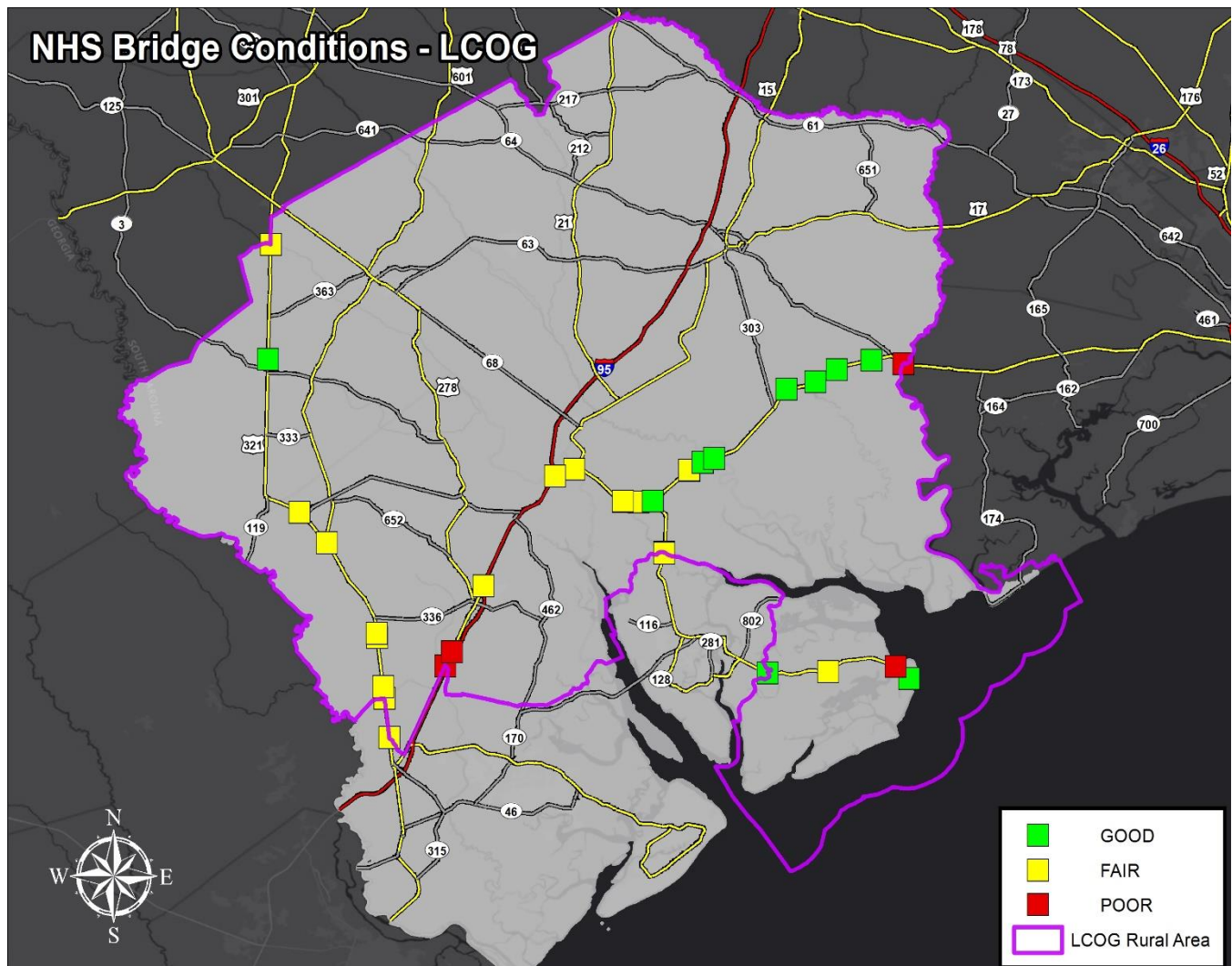
Bridge Condition

Given its coastal location, bridges play a very important role in vehicle movement in the LCOG area. The statewide baseline for bridges on all of the NHS is 41.6% good condition and 4.5% poor condition. The statewide 4-year target for bridge condition within the NHS system is 42.7% good and 6.0% poor.

	2017 Baseline Condition*	2 – Year Targets	4 - Year Targets
Performance Measure			
% NHS Bridges Deck Area in good condition	41.6%	42.2%	42.7%
% NHS Bridges Deck Area in poor condition	4.5%	4.0%	6.0%

*Taken from bridge target setting document

NHS bridges within LCOG and their condition of good, fair, or bad can be found below on the map.



2021-2027 Transportation Improvement Program

Based on SCDOT's final 2018 TAMP data, LCOG falls significantly below the good condition statewide baseline as well as its future targets. Additionally, LCOG fares worse than the poor condition NHS system bridge baseline (4.5%) as well as its two-year target (4.0%) and 4-year target (6%). The NHS system bridge conditions for LCOG as of 2019 are at 19.2% in good condition and 24.3% in poor condition (based on a total of 57 bridges). The majority of the bridges within the LCOG area currently fall within the fair range (roughly 56.5%). The table below shows count and deck area by condition rating for NHS bridges within the LCOG area.

NHS Bridge Condition Rating		By Count		By Deck Area	
		Count	Percentage	Deck Area (sq. ft.)	Percentage
LCOG	Good	13	22.8%	121,181.5 Sq. Ft.	19.18%
	Fair	38	66.7%	357,111.2 Sq. Ft.	56.53%
	Poor	6	10.5%	153,381 Sq. Ft.	24.28%

SCDOT and LCOG have programmed six bridges for replacement in the LCOG area to occur during the 2021-2027 TIP period: Rock Spring Road (S-51) Bridge Replacement over Unnamed Creek, Pocatoligo Road (S-17) Bridge Replacement over Broadwater Creek, S-15-74 over Buckhead Creek in Colleton County, Stocks Creek Rd (S-161) Bridge Replacement over Trib to Chehaw River in Colleton County, US 17 over Edisto River (2)/ Bridge Replacements, and S-15-74 over Buckhead Creek in Colleton County (V2). These programmed bridge replacements are anticipated to have construction begin in FY 2022 or later. As such, they will not impact the achievement of current 2020 and 2022-year statewide bridge targets, rather, their positive impact will affect subsequent future targets.

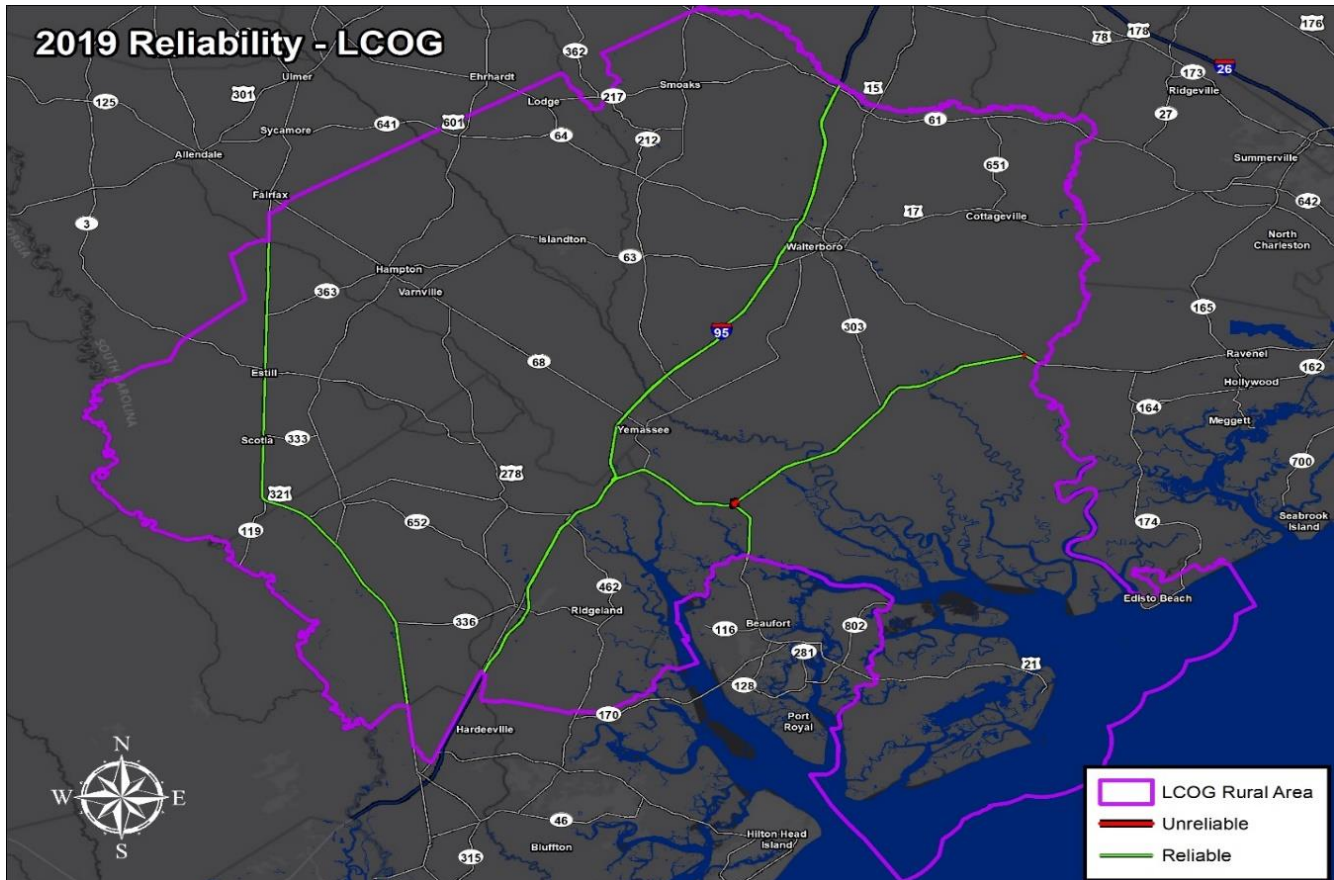
Performance Measure 3 – Reliability (PM-3)

SCDOT's statewide reliability targets for person miles traveled on both the interstate and non-interstate NHS have a baseline of 89.8% reliable and a future 4-year target of 81% reliable. Based on 2019 data provided by SCDOT, LCOG exceeds the baseline as well as the statewide four-year target. NHS Non-Interstate highways within LCOG are at 99.50 % while Interstate highways (I-95) are at 100% reliability. It should be noted that congestion and reliability are two different measures utilized in transportation planning, which is why this result may seem to be a contradiction.

Area	Road Classification	Number of TMCs	% of person-miles reliable	TTTR index
LCOG	Interstate Highway	44	100 %	1.16
	Non-Interstate Highway	44	99.5 %	-
	Total	88	99.9 %	-

The performance metric used to calculate reliability is the Level of Travel Time Reliability (LOTTR).

LOTRR is defined as the ratio of longer travel times (80th percentile) to a normal travel time (50th percentile) over all applicable roads during four time periods (AM peak, Mid-day, PM peak, and weekends) that cover the hours of 6 AM to 8 PM each day. The LOTRR ratio is calculated for each segment of applicable roadway, essentially comparing the segment with itself. A segment is deemed to be unreliable if its LOTRR is equal to or greater than 1.5 during all four time periods. The map below illustrates the NHS segments deemed reliable and unreliable within the LATS area.



As previously mentioned, and illustrated above, only a small portion of non-interstate highway segments have been deemed unreliable within the LCOG area. These non-interstate highway segments are primarily located by the intersection of US-17 (Charleston highway) and US-21 (Trask Parkway). This stretch of unreliability stems from the convergence of these two routes. Given the extremely short size of this segment and the high percentage of reliability in the LCOG area, there are no projects programed at this time to address this area at this time.

Of considerable interest in the LCOG area is the Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR) index, which measures consistency or reliability in truck travel times from day to day, which is of crucial interest to the logistic, supply chain management and trucking industries. The LCOG area is located between two of the busiest ports on the US East Coast, and among the very few ports whose growth rates continue to increase significantly. The port is only the beginning of moving imported products to market, or the final US stop for products being exported.

The LCOG area is likely to attract one or more major distribution/logistics centers in the foreseeable future, which will make the TTTR even more important. In 2019 that index was 1.16, considerably more reliable in comparison to South Carolina's baseline of 1.34 and even more so than the 10-year target of 1.53. LCOG has already forecast interstate interchange improvements that would be needed to accommodate such economic development in its Lowcountry Distribution/Logistics Cluster Study of June 2018. In addition, SCDOT has identified funds for preliminary engineering and right of way acquisition for increasing capacity and addressing future congestion from the Georgia state line to exit 8. This segment is only a portion of phase one (Exit 0 -33) of the I-95 Corridor Improvement Project. These improvements will increase the reliability performance measures in the future.

With significant road capacity increase projects limited to the widening of US 17 during the next five to ten years, existing roads and bridges will be under further pressure. Because the widening of Interstate 95 has been added to the list of future projects, the TTTR index goals may continue to be met over the longer term.