Rural Planning Work Program
2021-2023
Upper Savannah
Council of Governments

www.uppersavannah.com

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Program Overview

Transportation needs in the Upper Savannah region are as varied as the communities represented. The small urban centers of Greenwood and Laurens are challenged to improve quality of life while providing needed mobility services to their citizens. Rural Edgefield County is rapidly becoming a bedroom community for the Aiken/Augusta area and is attempting to deal with the associated growth pressures. Small towns such as Calhoun Falls and Saluda seek assistance in funding sidewalks and addressing safety issues at intersections. Each of these issues is directly associated with transportation planning, and Upper Savannah Council of Governments has been actively involved with these projects.

Upper Savannah’s transportation planning program involves consideration of the following principles:

- Ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and their vehicles in the region
- Involve the public and their elected representatives in the planning process
- Improve the efficient management of limited transportation resources
- Encourage responsible environmental stewardship in all projects

Financial assistance from the South Carolina Department of Transportation supports these activities at Upper Savannah Council of Governments (USCOG).

As the designated planning agency, USCOG is responsible for maintaining and creating plans for the entire region, maintaining financial records of the support funds, and sending recommendations to SC DOT. The USCOG Board of Directors is made up of representatives from each county and serves as the transportation policy advisory committee for the region. Most board members are elected officials in their communities, but some members are lay citizens. Each county council nominates a certain number of representatives to the USCOG Board based on population.

There is no designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in the region due to the lack of a concentrated area of population. USCOG serves as the planning entity for all transportation activities in the counties of Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, and Saluda. Census 2010 recorded the population for the entire region at 218,708.
Towards Performance-Based Transportation Planning at the Federal Level

In 2012, Congress passed the **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act**. MAP-21 introduced a new emphasis in the MPO transportation planning process, towards measurable performance and outcome-based metrics in the evaluation of projects and programs receiving federal support. MAP-21 focuses on 7 performance goal areas:

- Safety
- Infrastructure Condition
- Congestion Reduction
- System Reliability
- Freight Movement and Economic Vitality
- Environmental Sustainability
- Reduced Project Delivery Delays

**Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)**

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the **Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act** into law—the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes $305 billion nationwide, between 2016-2020, for roadway construction, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains the Federal Highway Authority’s (FHWA) focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs managed by FHWA, continues efforts to streamline project delivery, and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects.
In addition, the FAST Act continues the emphasis raised in MAP-21 on performance-based outcomes, requiring that the metropolitan transportation planning process "shall be continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive, and provide for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will address the following factors:

- Support the economic vitality of the region, 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 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, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism." [23 USC 450.306]
The FAST Act also requires federally funded transportation projects to support national goals for the nation’s transportation system by focusing on projects that:

- Achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
- Maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
- Achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System.
- Improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
- Improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
- Enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
- Reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies’ work practices. [23 U.S. Code § 150]

The Summary of Planning Factors Matrix below takes the focus areas from FAST Act and combines them with the on-going planning activities proposed at the local level. This chart shows how activities can overlap among planning factors and how the local planning entity is working to achieve FAST Act goals and objectives.
## Summary of Planning Factors Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Factors</th>
<th>Task 1 Transit Coordination</th>
<th>Task 2 TIP</th>
<th>Task 3 Consultation</th>
<th>Task 4 FAST Act</th>
<th>Task 5 Public Involvement</th>
<th>Task 6 LRP</th>
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Regional Overview

Population – 2019

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<th>County</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abbeville County</td>
<td>24,527</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgefield County</td>
<td>27,260</td>
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<td>Greenwood County</td>
<td>70,811</td>
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<td>Laurens County</td>
<td>67,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>McCormick County</td>
<td>9,463</td>
<td>-7 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saluda County</td>
<td>20,473</td>
<td>3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Savannah Region</td>
<td>220,027</td>
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Regional Guideshare Projects Underway

US Highway 25

Edgefield County

Regional Transportation Improvement Needs – Intersections

1. US-25 EDGEFIELD ROAD & S-494 SHORT CUT ROAD
2. US-221 HWY 72/221 E & S-99 KATEWAY
3. SC-14 & SC-HWAY 101
5. US-25 AUGUSTA ROAD & S-10 BAUSKETT ST
6. SC-121 LEE ST & S-41 EDISTO ST
7. SC-72 BUS CAMBRIDGE AVE W & S-108 MATHIS ROAD
8. SC-121 JOHNSTON HWY & S-21 FRUIT HILL ROAD
9. US-221 S & S-49 Lisbon Rd
10. SC-49 & SC-308 HWY308
11. SC-121 JOHNSTON HWY & S-37 ROCKY CREEK RD
12. S-178 MURRAH ROAD & S-339 SPRINGHAVEN DRIVE
13. US-76W & S-312 WILSONTOWN ROAD
14. SC14 & Owing's Parkway (County Road)
15. SC-20 & SC-201
16. SC-28 N & SC-10
17. SC-418 GULLIVER ST & S-67 DURBIN ROAD
18. US-221 SOUTH OF BRADLEY & SC-10 MCCORMICK HWY
19. SC-20 SOUTH OF DUE WEST & SC-185
20. S-136 IVORY KEY RD & SALUDA MD SCHOOL DR
21. SC-252 & SC-184
22. SC-20 NORTH OF DUE WEST & SC-185
23. SC-28N S-25 & S-37 RICHEY RD & FOSTER RD

Upper Savannah Council of Governments
Rural Planning Work Program
Regional Transportation Improvement Needs – Widening Projects

1 SC 246 from SC 72/U5 221 to SC 702  
2 US 25 Bypass from US 178 to Bus S-29 E Cambridge  
3 SC 121 from S-104 McQueen St to SC 191  
4 SC14 from S-183 to S-24 Lynn Ave  
5 SC 56 from Springdale Dr to S-98 Barrel Stave Rd  
6 Emerald Rd Phase II from S-100 to SC 246  
7 US 178 from SC 121 to SC 39 Ridge Spring Rd  
8 SC 121 from S-140 Wheeler Circle to S-51 Butler Rd turn lane at DSS  
9 SC 28 Bypass from SC72 to S-32 Old Calhoun Falls Rd  
10 SC 101 from I-385 to SC 14  
11 SC 28 5-401 Cedar Rd State Park Rd (Hamilton Branch St Pk)  
12 5-37 Bettis Academy Rd from US 25 to Aiken County line  

Public Transit Providers:  Edgefield County Senior Center, McCormick County Senior Center
Work Element I: Transit Planning & Coordination

Purpose: To provide transportation and transit related planning assistance to all local governments in the Upper Savannah region and to strengthen the regional partnership with SC DOT.

Project History: Upper Savannah Council of Government has partnered with South Carolina Department of Transportation to build and maintain regional traffic models, the regional Transportation Improvement Plan, a transit coordination study, and the completion of various enhancement grants.

Task: Continue to serve as a clearinghouse for transportation and transit related information in the Upper Savannah region of South Carolina. Maintain and build partnerships with the SC DOT and work to assist them in projects on the regional level. Continue to provide assistance to the Office of Public Transit in rating and ranking 5310 applications for van purchase or operating assistance and with SC DOT’s Transportation Alternative Program (TAP). Update the Regional Transit and Coordination Plan with guidance from SCDOT Office of Public Transit.

Outcome: USCOG staff will continue to act as a regional resource for staff at SC DOT. At the same time, USCOG staff will continue to draw upon the experience and expertise of the SC DOT staff to respond to transportation issues. Transit planning will be integrated into all regional planning activities. Assistance will continue to be given to the SC DOT Office of Public Transit in rating and ranking 5310 applications for van purchase or operating assistance, and with completion of TAP application upon request.

Budget: SC DOT Local % of Total RPWP

$17,000 $4,080 10%
Work Element II: Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

**Purpose:**
Based on the findings of the regional traffic model, work with SC DOT staff to define and prioritize transportation improvement needs in the Upper Savannah region based on safety, security needs, and available funding for FY 2020-2027.

**Project History:**
Upper Savannah Council of Governments and the South Carolina Department of Transportation have worked together for many years to review traffic model information and conduct site visits to roads to determine areas in need of improvement within the fiscal restraints of available DOT funding.

**Task:**
Based on the update of the long-range plan and the traffic model, review intersections and roads in need of improvement. If necessary, visit these sites and provide further data to SC DOT staff as necessary. Develop a list of potential projects, estimated costs, and project completion time for use by the Upper Savannah COG Board of Directors as they review recommendations for regional intersection and road improvements to be sent to SC DOT commissioners.

**Outcome:**
With up-to-date information backed up by the scientific analysis of the traffic model and the expertise of the SC DOT staff, the Upper Savannah COG Board of Directors will be able to make educated and informed recommendations for intersection and road improvements in the region. The priority list developed from this process will be used during board meetings, public hearings, or other gatherings as needed.

**Budget:**

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<th>SC DOT</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>% of Total RPWP</th>
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<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>$34,000</td>
<td>$8,160</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Work Element III: Consultation with local elected officials

Purpose: To gather local input on needs and priorities on the transportation system in the Upper Savannah region in order to create a safe and efficient multi-modal travel network.

Project History: Upper Savannah Council of Governments was created to encourage local governments to work together in pursing common regional goals. The USCOG board is made of up elected and non-elected representatives from each county. Staff members rely on these board members to give input on projects, but also to recommend other citizens to speak with, to suggest locations for public hearings, and to a general local contact in each county.

Task: Continuing the on-going efforts to consult local elected officials on a regular basis concerning transportation improvements is crucial to the overall transportation planning program effort at Upper Savannah. Meetings are held with local elected officials in their counties on a regular basis. Informal discussions are also held very frequently to discuss transportation needs. Keeping elected officials informed and responding to their requests for information make the entire planning process go more smoothly.

Outcome: Emphasizing communication and connection to local elected officials has been an important part of the USCOG planning program at all levels. By meeting with county officials on a regular basis, you learn their concerns and also share information that they can take back to their constituents. Local officials recommend other important community leaders, the best time or place to hold public hearings, and provide basic but crucial support to the regional planning program.

Budget:  

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<th>SC DOT</th>
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Upper Savannah Council of Governments  
Rural Planning Work Program
Work Element IV: FAST Act Implementation and Performance Management Strategies

Purpose: Federal requirements and grant opportunities will require local and state governments to document and move towards creating plans to promote more cost efficient and environmentally responsible development patterns.

Project History: Many communities are taking it upon themselves to plan for more cost efficient and effective development that requires less long-term financial support.

Task: Evaluate current planning processes related to the FAST Act (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation) and planning considerations such as livability, sustainability, climate change, and goods movement. Coordinate efforts to develop performance management strategies related to safety and target specific areas with the most need of safety improvements.

Outcome: As livability and sustainability are still terms in development, we will monitor how the terms are defined and research grant opportunities that will be available for our region. At the end of this fiscal year we should have a better understanding on what the federal government will require for potential grants and we will begin putting plans in place to ensure the region meets those basic qualifications.

Budget: SC DOT | Local | % of Total RPWP
$34,000 | $8,160 | 20%
Work Element V: Public Involvement

Purpose: Continue to involve the public on actions related to the long-range plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan.

Project History: As federal requirements require opportunities for public input, USCOG and SC DOT have partnered in the past to host public hearings in affected communities.

Task: Guide the public involvement process in planning for transportation projects in the Upper Savannah region. Special attention will be given to groups not usually participating in the transportation planning process.

Outcome: By using the resources from current staff at USCOG and SC DOT, along with the potential for using a consultant as a back-up, our transportation program will continue to work to ensure that the public has every opportunity to comment on proposed projects.

Budget:

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<th>SC DOT</th>
<th>Local</th>
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<td>$17,000</td>
<td>$4,080</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Work Element VI: Long Range Plan Maintenance

Purpose: Continue the process of reviewing the regional Long Range Plan to coincide with the update of the statewide Long Range Plan.

Project History: The update and maintain the Long Range Plan to coincide with the update and maintenance of the statewide Long Range Plan.

Task: In conjunction with SC DOT, review and evaluate the regional Long Range Plan according to the latest guidelines from the state and federal governments.

Outcome: By using the resources from current staff at USCOG and SC DOT, review and maintenance of the Long Range Plan will be evaluated and completed.

Budget:

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<th>SC DOT</th>
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## Budget Summary

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