



**Commission Members:**

- Tony K. Cox Chairman
- Pamela L. Christopher, Vice Chairman
- David E. "Gene" Branham, Commissioner
- William B. Dukes, Commissioner
- J. Barnwell Fishburne, Commissioner
- T.J. Johnson, Commissioner
- Max K. Metcalf, Commissioner

**DRAFT**

**Commission Workshop**  
**Minutes and Actions**

**South Carolina Department of Transportation**

Thursday, August 17, 2023 at 9:00 AM

Room 306, SCDOT Headquarters

**Commissioners present at the meeting were:**

Tony K. Cox	Chairman
Pamela L. Christopher	Vice Chairman
David E. "Gene" Branham	Commissioner
William B. Dukes	Commissioner
J. Barnwell Fishburne	Commissioner
T.J. Johnson	Commissioner
Max K. Metcalf	Commissioner

**Also present at the meeting were:**

- Christy Hall, Secretary of Transportation
- Justin P. Powell, Chief of Staff
- Andy Leaphart, Interim Deputy Secretary for Engineering
- Maggie Hendry, Acting Deputy Secretary for Finance and Administration
- Brent Rewis, Deputy Secretary for Intermodal Planning
- Mark LaBruyere, Director of Internal Audit Services
- Emily Lawton, FHWA

**Action Taken:**

**1. Call to Order—Chairman Cox**

Chairman Cox called the August 17, 2023 Commission Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. Roll Call—Chairman Cox**

Chairman Cox called the roll and declared that a quorum was present.

**3. Approval of Workshop Agenda (Action Required)—Chairman Cox**

Motion by: Commissioner Branham

Second by: Commissioner Christopher

[A 50/2023](#)

Approved

**4. FY25 Budget and 10-Year Plan Update—Acting Deputy Secretary Hendry**

[WS 3/2023](#)

Acting Deputy Secretary Hendry stated the workshop would focus on the 10-Year Plan and the budget update 2024-2025 Fiscal Year and she would also review the agency's revenue streams. She provided a recap of the various funding bills. Ms. Hendry stated Act 40 implemented the gas tax in 2017 had been completely phased-in, with 28.75 cents. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IJA) went into effect in November 2021 increased federal funding to \$1 billion per year through FY2026. The agency received \$453 million in ARPA funding from the state's General Assembly and \$133 million in state rural interstate funding—which had been applied to the interstate program.

For FY 24-25, the agency was fine tuning its program with minor adjustments being made to programs to accommodate strategic goals: maintenance operating budget, bridge reactionary maintenance, and

guardrail. The Regional Mobility Program was gradually being increased from \$138 million in 2021 to \$238 million in 2027. Salaries were increased. Maintenance Operations had increased from \$169 million to \$184 million. Secretary Hall reviewed the Manpower Chart with the Commissioners. The Bridge Reactionary Maintenance had increased from \$19.25 million to \$30 million to address the increasing emergency and other repairs (found during routine maintenance) to bridges, include bridge deck and patch repairs, steel or concrete pile repairs, or joint bearing repairs. Sixty percent of bridges were near their end of life and needed to be replaced or to receive large repairs. Guardrail budget had increased from \$15 million to \$20 million to address guardrail strikes and the material price increases.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether the agency monitored the maintenance required versus the lifespan of the equipment? He also asked how did the agency determine a formula to decide whether the equipment should be repaired or replaced? Chief Engineer for Bridges Rob Perry reported the agency reviewed data to determine which bridges would receive a repair or be replaced. He noted that if the bridges were repaired, they were done so in a way that the repairs would last 25 years. Secretary Hall stated under Mr. Perry's leadership, the agency had implemented a bridge rehab program to extend the life cycle of bridges. Secretary Hall stated the agency intended to continue to request additional funding for bridges from the legislature.

Acting Deputy Secretary Hendry reviewed the agency's revenues line by line with the commissioners.

Commissioner Johnson asked what was being done to offset the decrease in gas tax revenues as the number of electric vehicles increased. He also noted the increased weight on the roads due to electric vehicles weighing more. Chief of Staff Powell noted that SC had already implemented a tax on electric vehicles which would need to be revisited. He also state that the major concern regarding the electric vehicle weights was the weight of electric trucks. This would all need to be further addressed and worked out in the future.

Commissioner Dukes asked whether there was an appetite in the legislature to increase the gas tax. Chairman Metcalf noted that the legislature had recently increased the gas tax. Secretary Hall concurred that there was not an appetite to increase the gas tax because of the relatively recent gas tax increase and also the legislature would compare the state to neighboring states' gas taxes. Secretary Hall noted that the agency had been very successful to get one-time funding to use to improve the state's infrastructure. The biggest policy issue the legislature had with regard to the agency in addition to the gas tax was applying a significant amount of recurring general revenue to SCDOT.

For the 10-Year Plan and STIP the proposed motion for consideration in September was: *The Secretary is directed to adjust the 10-Year Plan and Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan to add the anticipated federal funds to increase existing program levels.*

*The Secretary is to conform the plan to actuals. Additionally, the Secretary is to review and recommend any revisions or additions to the performance targets established for the 10-Year plan and present those to the Commission for its consideration.*

Ms. Hendry stated that state revenues were stagnant in the four major categories of motor fuel tax, car sales tax, DMV fees, and the General Fund. The agency had assumed projected Federal apportionments under IIJA. The budget incorporated revisions of the 10-Year Plan proposed by the Secretary of Transportation. The estimated revenues total was \$2.737 billion. This included federal reimbursements (\$1.035 billion), state revenues (\$1.616 billion), partner projects (\$45 million), and cash usage (\$21 million). The expected expenditures were \$2.737 billion. This included maintenance and system preservation (\$1.412 billion), capacity and operational improvements (\$1.019 billion) and remaining operations (\$306 million). The total budgeted expenditures were \$2.737 billion.

The General Funds Requests were 1) Continuation of the \$120 million in recurring funds for federal aid match; 2) \$6 million in recurring funds for off-interstate litter pick-up that is currently underway; 3) \$200 million recurring for bridges: Five years to ensure long-term mobility and freight movement by tackling bridges in corridor-specific approach.

For the 24-25 Budget, proposed motion for consideration in September was: Based on the forecasted revenues and expenditures as presented, recommend approval of the proposed \$2.7 billion dollar budget authority request for State Fiscal Year 2024-25. Staff is directed to proceed with preparing the necessary submittals and, under the authority of the Secretary of Transportation, adjusting the budget as necessary to account for variances between forecasts and actuals.

## **5. MPO/COG Boundaries Update—Deputy Secretary Rewis**

WS 4/2023

Deputy Secretary Rewis stated that the agency relies on the MPO and COGs to identify, rank and prioritize projects and the agency then provides Guideshare funding for those projects. The Commission reviewed the MPO and COG study area maps for each area of the state. The map boundaries are based on the 2020 Census findings. ACATS MPO (Anderson Clemson area) had an increase in areas represented. Clemson and Pendleton areas were moved to the ACATS. There was a slight growth in the ARTS MPO (Aiken). There was not much change in the CHATS MPO (Charleston). There were two changes in the COATS (the midlands area). All of Kershaw County was moved to another area and part of Calhoun County was removed to the Lower Savannah area. There was no change in the FLATS MPO (Florence). The GPATS MPO (Greenville) had Pelzer and Clemson removed and Greer stayed within the GPATS MPO. GSATS MPO (Grand Strand area) had very little change. In the LATS MPO (Beaufort area), it was determined to keep the growing area in the LATS MPO. RFATS MPO (York/Rock Hill) saw tremendous growth but not a big change in the MPO. The boundaries changed to the state line. The Woodruff area was added to the SPATS (Spartanburg) MPO. In the SUATS MPO (Sumter), there was not a large change in population.

Secretary Hall stated that the agency would bring the MPO maps back to the Commission at a later time for their approval.

## **6. Regional Mobility Program Direction—Secretary Hall**

WS 1/2023

Secretary Hall reviewed the proposed allocation of approximately \$213 million for the Regional Mobility Program. She explained because the 2020 Census data and boundaries had been finalized, the agency was able to calculate the fully phased-in allocations for the year 4 at \$238 million. This would ramp up half the amount for the Fiscal Year 2023-24. This would retain minimum guarantee of \$5 million for any MPO/COG. Secretary Hall stated the agency would be asking the Commission to approve \$67 million towards the COG 2023 Guideshare and \$146 million towards the MPO Guideshare.

The federal aid highway program requires a minimum of approximately \$62 million be distributed to MPOs. In most states, the local governments were typically asked to provide the required 20% match; however, in South Carolina, the Commission had taken the policy position to delegate much larger amount of funding annually (\$238 million) to not only the MPOS but to all of the regional planning organizations. Additionally, the commission had generally agreed to provide the required 20% matching funds. The delegation of funding and project selection to the regional planning organizations was in lieu of the SCDOT itself selecting projects outside of our paving, bridge, interstate and safety programs.

Secretary Hall reviewed the Regional Mobility Program projects that were advanced to construction since the launch of the 10-year plan. Each MPO and COG was addressed with the amount of funding directed towards widenings, new location, roads, intersection improvements, corridor improvements, interchange improvements, enhancements, signals, and safety improvements.

She explained the purpose of the Regional Mobility Program was to steer MPOs and COGs to use their funding for strategic purposes identified at the state level by the Commission and measure the results in terms of projects advanced to construction. The Regional Mobility Program optimized the existing network by pushing more volume through using spot improvements, access management and signal systems/ITS solutions while also tackling known safety issues identified through Road Safety Audits. They also expanded the existing network by widening existing roads, building new location roads and targeting bike/ped needs. There was much discussion regarding workforce transportation.

The Commission entertained comments from the representatives from MPOs and COGs in attendance at the meeting.

Chief of Staff Powell asked the Commission to review Commission Policy #3 which was written in 2011 prior to the launch of the 10-year Plan. Mr. Powell explained the policy needed to be revised because it was inconsistent with the SCDOT's Complete Streets Policy and was crafted at a time when pushing maintenance responsibilities to the local governments and paving projects were a priority of the administration at the time. The Commission reviewed the edits and deletions to the policy.

**7. Executive Session Pursuant to S.C. Code Section 30-4-70(a)(1) to Discuss  
Personnel and Organizational Matters**

[A 51/2023](#)  
Approved

Motion by: Commissioner Christopher

Second by: Commissioner Dukes

Chairman Cox stated the following persons were to meet in Secretary Hall's office suite for the Executive Session: Secretary Hall. The recorder was turned off. The Commission members and Secretary Hall moved to Secretary Hall's office suite for the executive session.

Upon completion of the Executive Session, Chairman Cox asked if there was a motion to end the Executive Session. Commissioner Christopher made the motion and Commissioner Branham seconded the motion. The motion was approved. The commission ended the executive session for the purpose to discuss personnel and organizational matters.

Chairman Cox noted that no items were voted on during the Executive Session.

**8. Adjournment (Action Required)**

Motion by: Branham

Second by: Metcalf

Approved

The Commission Workshop was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

The Commission approved the August 17, 2023 Commission Workshop at the September 21, 2023 Commission meeting.

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Tony K. Cox, Commission Chairman