

## SCDOT's 10-Year Plan exceeding targets, expanding goals SCDOT making progress in fixing roads, bridges

By Bob Kudelka

Secretary of Transportation **Christy A. Hall** presented the 2022 "State of SC's Transportation Network" to the SCDOT Commission during its March meeting in Columbia.

"What is the bottom line up front? We are making excellent progress towards getting to a state of good repair, with that emphasis having really been the cornerstone of our 10-year plan previously – focusing on fix it first as much we could," Hall said.

Population and economic growth in South Carolina continue at a high-level pace. The Palmetto State has the 4th largest state highway system in the United States and has the 10th fastest population growth rate in the nation.

And despite the pandemic, South Carolina's road and bridge program has continued to remain strong. Ample planning to allow SC to be extremely well-positioned to be able to deploy additional projects.

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Hall explained that one of the "fantastic" things the Legislature did was to ensure SCDOT had a diversified revenue stream. Not only did the gas tax increase, but DOT began receiving dollars from the vehicle sales tax and other fees.

"We became not as dependent on the gas tax and federal funds, and were able to incorporate in those additional dollars," Hall said.

When driving dropped nearly 50 percent early in Covid pandemic, the sales taxes from increased vehicle purchases helped with our funding, leaving about a 12 percent gap. That gap was made up by administrative cost-cutting and belt-tightening measures. "Many other states were not able to do that...and had to cut back on their programs for various reasons," Hall said.



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*Rural Road Safety*



*Paving*



*Bridges*



*Interstates*



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**Christy A. Hall**  
South Carolina Secretary of Transportation

In addition, advanced planning was critical to allow South Carolina to be well-positioned to be able to deploy additional projects in case more funding became available. "That proved to be the point here over the past year or so," she said.

Maintaining a reliable product delivery stream has been "incredibly important to keep the industry moving forward with plenty of work to do," Hall said.

Contracting levels for road and bridge construction are at \$3.7 billion, an all-time high for the agency. "We've never been any-

where close to this kind of number before," Hall said.

"The money's been put to work and the industry has responded," Hall said. "The bottom line is we've exceeded the targets that we've set up so it's time to raise the bar."

The agency has a new target of 1,250 rural road safety miles and is also raising the bar on a new target of improving 500 bridges.

SC's gas tax is projected to bring in approximately \$910 million annually, which

is allocated to the County Transportation Committees, SCDOT and the State Infrastructure Bank.

Now, Hall said, "we must turn our attention toward growth, congestion and economic development."

SCDOT expects more federal dollars to become available, and Hall anticipated needing \$100 million in matching funds to draw down these funds. "We're poised waiting for the dollars to become available to really slingshot things ahead," Hall said.

The additional elements to be added to the 10-year plan include rural economic development projects, regional mobility programs, bridge rehabilitation projects, more paving and safety projects, more interstate work and adding drainage work.

**See 10-Year Plan  
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