8.0 TRANSPORTATION

8.1 OVERVIEW

The ability to be mobile, across a variety of transportation modes, is critical to the success of a community. Accessibility to modes of transportation that enable residents to move around the City ensures a healthy and livable community. Mobility also supports the economic vitality of an area by creating and sustaining an environment in which businesses and industries can thrive. Mobility is defined in broad terms as moving people and goods safely throughout the community using various transportation modes.

Due to its centralized location, North Charleston is the transportation hub of the region. The City is home to two U.S. interstates, major US highways, multiple rail lines and intermodal facilities, the State’s busiest airport, major marine port terminals, public transportation services, and a passenger rail service. As the third most populated city in the State, North Charleston also has a large and growing resident population that calls for more alternative transportation options including pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Such a multimodal system needs to be well coordinated to ensure access to the network and to also provide safe connections between modes. North Charleston is committed to improving multimodal transportation throughout the City.

The Battery Park Pedestrian Bridge which will connect Riverfront Park to new development across Noisette Creek is a shining example of that dedication. The City’s mix of urban and suburban areas in transition, increased growth areas prime for redevelopment, growth of employment centers, and major port and intermodal infrastructure investments will undoubtedly generate increased demands on the area’s transportation system. These demands, if not addressed will make the City more vulnerable to traffic congestion and potential negative impacts to the economy and quality and life of local residents.

8.2 EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

8.2.1 Road Network

North Charleston’s road network is central to the transportation of both people and goods in and around Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties. The City’s transportation network is composed of a hierarchy of streets. The functional classification system, established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for roads and highways in the United States, is based on the types of trips that occur, the basic purpose for which the street was designed and the volume of traffic that the roadway facility carries. This roadway classification consists primarily of arterials, collectors and local roads. In general all roadways serve two major objectives to varying degrees - mobility and land access. Figure 46 provides an illustration of how a road network connects within a city. Table 20 and Figure 47 together summarize the functional classification of the City’s road network.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROADWAY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>MAJOR ROADWAYS</th>
<th>CENTERLINE MILES</th>
<th>PERCENT OF ROAD NETWORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| INTERSTATE                       | Interstate highways are the highest level of principal arterial roadways serving high-speed and high-volume regional traffic. They provide the greatest level of mobility with access limited to grade-separated interchanges. Facilities typically link major urban areas together. | I-26  
I-526                                      | 41.75 | 5.5 %                  |
| PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL               | This system supplements the higher order arterial/interstate system and links major centers of metropolitan areas together, provides a high degree of mobility and can provide mobility through rural areas. | Dorchester Road  
US-78 (Rivers Ave/University Boulevard)  
Remount Road  
US-52  
Spruill Avenue  | 58.51 | 7.8 %                  |
| MINOR ARTERIAL                   | This system serves trips of moderate length and offers connectivity to the higher arterial network. Minor Arterials link cities, towns, rural centers and other major destinations that are capable of generating travel over relatively long distances. This system forms an integrated network that provides interstate and inter-county service. | Ashley Phosphate Road  
North Rhett Avenue  
Palmetto Commerce Parkway  
Ladson Road  
International Boulevard  
Montague Avenue  | 41.68 | 5.5 %                  |
| COLLECTOR                        | This system generally gathers or collects traffic from local streets and channels it to the higher order arterial network. Collectors provide less mobility than arterials, usually support lower speeds and are used to travel shorter distances. Collectors balance mobility with land access. The collector system provides connection between neighborhoods, from neighborhoods to minor business clusters and also provides supplemental connections between major traffic generators and regional job concentrations within the metropolitan area. | Azalea Avenue  
Cross County Road  
Patriot Boulevard  
Wescott Boulevard  
Otranto Road  
Rhett Avenue  
Michaux Parkway  
South Aviation Avenue  | 35.15 | 4.7 %                  |
| LOCAL STREET                      | Typically small residential and commercial streets that connect to other local streets and feed into the collector system. Local streets serve short trips at lower speeds, as well as local travel for pedestrian and bicyclists. They have substantial land access to residential areas, businesses and other local land uses. These usually make up the majority of roads in the system. | -                                      | 575.75 | 76.5 %                 |
| TOTAL                            |                                                                                          |                                      | 752.84 | 100 %                  |

Table 20: North Charleston Roadway Functional Classification

26. SCDOT, 2012 Roadway Functional Classification
Figure 47: North Charleston Roadway Network and Functional Classification (SCDOT, 2012)
8.2.2 Traffic Volumes

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) maintains annual average daily traffic (AADT) count information for all counties in the state. Count stations are set up along major roads in order to measure the existing bi-directional traffic volumes. Sampled counts are then adjusted to reflect the average daily traffic over a year. Figure 48 indicates the 2017 traffic count data for the City. As expected, the higher traffic volumes are being carried on roadways with the higher functional classification.

The level of congestion on a roadway can be indicated quantitatively by the volume/capacity ratio (V/C). V/C is a measure of the amount of traffic on a given roadway in relation to the amount of traffic the roadway was originally designed to handle. A V/C less than 0.8 generally indicate that a roadway is operating acceptably. As the V/C approaches 1.0, the roadway becomes increasingly congested. It may operate acceptably for much of the day, but is likely to be congested during peak periods. A V/C greater than 1.0 indicates a roadway that is carrying more traffic than for which it was designed. Roadways with high V/C are generally very congested, especially in the peak periods, and may operate in stop-and-go conditions.

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure used to describe roadway congestion levels and is expressed as a grade between “A” for excellent and “F” for failing. Table 21 provides the general description of each of the LOS ratings A through F. These LOS ratings are based on V/C ratio values. The BCDCOG uses a travel demand model to understand the future capacity needs for the region. The model includes analysis of existing LOS for major roads and projected future LOS for the roadways in the region. Existing LOS is provided for the model base year of 2015 and future LOS for the 2040 Existing and Committed (E+C) transportation network which includes any roadway project in the CHATS planning area that is currently under construction, completely programmed and/or partially funded. From a cost-benefit perspective, roadways with a LOS rating of A and B reflect situations where the road has excess capacity. Given the cost of road improvements and the magnitude of traffic problems across the region, it is not financially feasible or desirable to strive for a LOS of A or B on each roadway. In general, roadways with a LOS of C or higher is acceptable on facilities in non-urban areas and LOS D or higher is acceptable in urban areas. Comparing the CHATS Travel Demand Model LOS between 2015 and 2040 the major facilities either maintaining a LOS E-F or experiencing a drop to LOS E-F include:

- Dorchester Road (Ashley Phosphate Road to Ladson Road)
- I-26 (Ashley Phosphate Road to Aviation Avenue) (Ashley Phosphate Road to US-78)
- North Rhett Avenue
- Ladson Road
- South Aviation Road
- Cross County Road
- Ashley Phosphate Road

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOS (V/C)</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (0.00 - 0.30)</td>
<td>Free Flow: traffic flows at or above the posted speed limit and motorists have complete mobility between lanes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (0.31 - 0.50)</td>
<td>Reasonably Free Flow: speeds are maintained, however maneuverability within traffic stream is slightly restricted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (0.51 - 0.70)</td>
<td>Stable Flow: travel at or near free flow speeds, movements are restricted due to higher volumes but not objectionable by users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (0.71 – 0.90)</td>
<td>Approaching Unstable Flow: speeds are slightly decreased, higher volumes are noted and operator comfort is reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E (0.91 – 0.99)</td>
<td>Unstable Flow: operating at capacity levels, vehicles are closely spaced and maneuverability is limited, incidents can cause flow breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (&gt; 1.00)</td>
<td>Forced Flow: Demand volumes are greater than capacity with resulting breakdown in traffic flow, travel times cannot be predicted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21: SCDOT Level of Service Guideline
Figure 48: North Charleston 2017 AADT Traffic Counts (SCDOT, 2017)
Figure 49: 2015 Base Year Road Network Level of Service (LOS)
Figure 50: 2040 Existing + Committed (E+C) Road Network Level of Service (LOS)
8.3 TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

8.3.1 Mode of Transportation to Work

Data from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) provides information on how North Charleston residents commute to work. Figure 51 shows that 78.8% of North Charleston’s working population drove alone to work. This is slightly lower than rates seen by the State (82.6%) and the Charleston-North Charleston urbanized area (80.7%).

When compared to other modes of travel to work, summarized in Figure 52, proportionally more of North Charleston’s working population carpooled and utilized public transportation to commute to work. However, the State and Charleston-North Charleston urban area had a larger percent of their population traveling to work by alternative transportation modes including walking, bicycling and working from home. This could be due in part to the inclusion of the more urbanized central business district of the Charleston peninsula that offers a more walkable and bike able environment as well as the inclusion of job types that offer the opportunity to work at home (telecommuting).

![Figure 51: Percent of working population utilizing single occupancy vehicle to travel to work](image1)

![Figure 52: Mode of Transportation to Work (2017)](image2)
8.3.2 Travel Time to Work

Figure 53 compares the travel time to work data for the City of North Charleston, the Charleston-North Charleston urbanized area and South Carolina. Unlike both the State and Charleston-North Charleston urbanized area, the largest proportion of the City’s working population commute roughly 20-24 minutes to work on average. In general, a smaller portion of North Charleston residents make shorter (less than 10 minutes) or more localized trips to work.

The mean travel time to work for the residents of North Charleston has increased from 21.8 minutes (2000 Census) to 23.1 minutes (2013-2017 ACS 5-Yr).

8.3.3 Vehicle Availability

The City of North Charleston has greater than proportionate number of working households with no vehicle access (5%) and access to one vehicle (32%) when compared to both the State and the Charleston-North Charleston urbanized area. This indicates North Charleston’s population as a higher propensity to utilize alternative transportation options, such as public transit or private rideshare services.
8.3.4 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Data collected from the US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program provides insight into the travel patterns of persons who live and work in North Charleston. Figure 55 provides a summary of the commuter flow of workers into and out of the City for 2015. Approximately 74,000 persons commuted into the City of North Charleston to work; 14,283 live and work in the City; and 25,309 North Charleston residents work outside the City.

Figure 55: 2015 North Charleston Commuter Flows (Jobs Inflow-Outflow)
North Charleston Labor and Commuter Sheds were also developed from an analysis of LEHD data, provided in Figure 56. Shed analysis results provide more detail to commuter patterns, indicating where persons who work in North Charleston live, and where individuals who live in North Charleston work.

The Labor Shed Analysis shows travel patterns of commuters who work in North Charleston. Workers commute largely from the following areas:

- Dorchester Road / Ashley Phosphate Road
- Goose Creek (US-52/Red Bank Road/US-176)
- Summerville (Ladson Road/Sangaree)

The Commuter Shed Analysis shows travel patterns of commuters who live in North Charleston. Commuter sheds show where area residents work or are employed. A large number of North Charleston residents commute to the following employment areas:

- Downtown Charleston
- Leeds Avenue
- Tanger Outlets / Mall Drive
- Boeing
- Northwoods Mall
- Trident Health Systems
- Bosch
Figure 56: North Charleston Labor Shed (Left) and Commuter Shed (Right) \footnote{Maps do not contain most recent annexation for North Charleston across the Ashley River as there is no data for area.}
8.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

8.4.1 Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA)

Established in 1997, CARTA serves the urbanized area of the region and currently operates 21 fixed bus routes which include 18 local routes and three Downtown Area Shuttle (DASH) routes in the historic Charleston peninsula. It also operates four commuter express routes which serve seven park and ride facilities and the Charleston International Airport. CARTA’s Tel-a-Ride (ADA paratransit) provides demand response service to qualified individuals within three-quarter of a mile of a fixed-route alignment. While CARTA’s buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts, many disabled riders need the door-to-door transportation service provided by the Tel-A-Ride service. Of the 18 local fixed bus routes and four express routes provided by CARTA, seven fixed routes and three express commuter routes operate within the City of North Charleston. The overall transit system for North Charleston can be view in Figure 57. These routes are:

- Local Fixed Routes:
  - Route 10 – Local (Rivers Avenue)
  - Route 11 – Local (Dorchester/Airport)
  - Route 12 – Local (Upper Dorchester/AFB)
  - Route 13 – Local (Remount Road)
  - Routes 102 – Neighborhood Circulator (North Neck)
  - Route 103 – Neighborhood Circulator (Leeds Avenue)
  - Route 104 – Neighborhood Circulator (Montague Avenue)

- Express Commuter Bus:
  - Express 1 (James Island – North Charleston)
  - Express 3 (Dorchester Road – Summerville)
  - Express 4 (Airport Express - provides direct connection between the Charleston International Airport and Downtown Charleston)

8.4.2 CARTA Transit Facilities

CARTA has two major transit hubs or transfer centers: the Mary Street Garage Transit Center in downtown Charleston and the SuperStop located at the intersection of Rivers Avenue and Cosgrove Avenue in North Charleston. These hubs facilitate increased access to the transit service area by allowing system users to transfer from one route to another and from one system to another at select locations. The SuperStop transfer center allows transit users to connect to routes serving downtown Charleston, West Ashley, James Island and Mount Pleasant. In 2018, construction was completed on the first phase of the new North Charleston Transit Facility, located on Gaynor Avenue at the site of the old North Charleston Amtrak station. Phase I of the multimodal facility included construction of a new building and completion of half of the train platform. Phase II of the project includes demolition of the old Amtrak Station, completion of the second half of the train platform.
platform and construction of CARTA bus facilities. This new intermodal hub will increase access and connectivity to Amtrak passenger rail services, regional bus service (Southeastern Stages) and CARTA’s local bus services.

Park-and-Ride (PnR) facilities are also important facilities that support increased access to the transit system. These facilities serve transit users beyond the typical quarter-mile walk shed from a transit stop. PnR lots allow users to drive to and park in the lots to access transit service. There are currently two PnR facilities located in the City of North Charleston:

- Rivers Avenue Park & Ride serving both CARTA and TriCounty Link
- Festival Centre Park & Ride serving CARTA Express Route 3

The Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) recently completed a Regional Park-and-Ride Study (2018) that produced a comprehensive plan that identifies sites for permanent parking facilities throughout the region. Assessments were made on both existing and new sites and recommendations were provided for improving or expanding the Park and Ride network. The Rivers Avenue Park and Ride serves the most productive CARTA route (Route 10), Express Route 1, as well as TriCounty Link (Commuter Service 2). This facility is the most utilized lot in the region, accommodating roughly 200 vehicles and is usually at or near capacity. Recommendations from the Regional Park-and-Ride Study include a new Rivers Avenue Park and Ride, an expansion of the existing lot at Festival Centre (~ 30% utilization rate), and development of three additional North Charleston lots in the short to mid-term. Figure 57 provides an overview of the transit routes, major hubs and other transit related facilities located within North Charleston.

8.4.3 TriCounty Link (TCL)

TriCounty Link (TCL) commuter express routes operate between a network of park-and-ride facilities and other key service points throughout the rural service area, and connect to CARTA services at coordinated transfer locations. One of the major coordinated transfer locations between the rural TCL system and the CARTA system is the Rivers Avenue Park and Ride in North Charleston. TCL local fixed routes B102 (Moncks Corner/Goose Creek) and D305 (Summerville Connector), and commuter routes CS1 (Monks Corner/North Charleston) and CS2 (Summerville/North Charleston) partially operate within the North Charleston area and provides access and connection to the CARTA system. Figure 56 provides an overview of the major transit routes operating in the City.
Figure 57: Transit Routes and Transit Related Facilities
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities enhance the livability of the community. Walking and biking have many benefits for both personal and environmental health. Safety for pedestrians and bicyclists is however a key challenge in North Charleston due to the high volume of traffic in the area. Sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes are important pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure that enables safer streets. It is especially important that safe routes to schools are in place.

Sidewalks are especially important in locations where the pedestrian activity is concentrated, including parks, schools, transit stops, retail centers, and employment centers. A typical comfortable walking distance is about five-minutes for a one-way trip, or approximately one-quarter mile, and this distance is commonly referred to as a pedestrian shed, or “ped-shed.” In 2015, the City of North Charleston mapped several ped-sheds using GIS in order to understand where the sidewalks most needed improvements. In 2017 the BCD WalkBike pedestrian and bicycle master plan was completed for the region. Major recommendations addressed improvement or expansion of the region’s bicycle and pedestrian network to increase regional mobility, connectivity and safety for non-motorized travel. Improvements in the BCD WalkBike plan incorporate some of the major recommendations found in the City’s 2015 ped-shed analysis.

8.5.1 Trails

In addition to sidewalks and bike lanes, dedicated multi-use paths, greenways, and trails can be used to provide a safe place for pedestrians and bicycles that are separate from motor vehicle traffic. Current bike lanes and bike trails in the City include:

- **Ladson Road** – A bike lane is provided on Ladson Road between Dorchester Road and University Boulevard.
- **University Boulevard** – A bike trail separate from the road exists between Charleston Southern University and the U.S. 52/U.S. 78 interchange.
- **Wescott Boulevard** – A bike trail is provided along Wescott Boulevard from Dorchester Road to the intersection of Patriot Boulevard.
- **Dorchester Road** – A separated hiker/biker trail is provided along Wescott Boulevard from Dorchester Road to the intersection of Patriot Boulevard.
- **Patriot Boulevard** – A bike trail runs along Patriot Boulevard from Appian Way to Club Course Drive
- **Spruill Avenue** – North and south bike lanes are provided on Spruill Avenue between Buist Avenue and the southern City limit.

Figure 58 provides existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the City.
Figure 58: North Charleston Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
8.6 SEAPORT FACILITIES

The Port of Charleston, the nation’s ninth busiest container port, is owned and operated by the South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA). It is a major freight gateway for international trade and an economic engine for the region. The Port currently operates at four locations along the Wando and Cooper Rivers. Freight movements to and from these facilities are primarily supported by truck and rail. The two port terminals located in North Charleston are the Veteran’s Terminal and the North Charleston Terminal.

A third port terminal, the Hugh Leatherman, Sr. Terminal (HLT), is currently under construction (planned Phase I opening 2021) to increase the port’s capacity and ability to meet the future growth anticipated in this trade gateway. The HLT is a 284-acre container facility which, when fully built, will boost capacity at the Port of Charleston by approximately 50 percent. In 2002, an MOU was signed by the South Carolina State Ports Authority and North Charleston stating that before container operations commenced, a truck access road from I-26 to the HLT and three rail overpasses at Rivers Avenue and Harley Street, Rivers Avenue and Durant Road, and North Rhett and I-526 would need to be built. Figure 60 provides an overview of the seaport facilities located in North Charleston.

SCPA, the State of South Carolina and other partner agencies have committed to invest in port and port-related infrastructure that will not only increase port capacity, but also enhance the operational performance and transportation infrastructure related to the movement of cargo at the Port of Charleston and throughout the State. Major investments include:

- **Harbor deepening** – SCPA is working to deepen the harbor channel from 45 feet to 52 feet to accommodate the growing number of large and new Post-Panamax vessels that call on the Port.
- **New Terminal** – Construction of the 286-acre Hugh Leatherman Terminal (HLT).
- **Intermodal Transfer Facility (ICFT)** – Funded and operated by Palmetto Railways the new ICTF will be located on the former naval base near the HLT to allow near-dock rail service.
- **New Port Access Road** – Construction of the new Port Access Road, which will provide connection between the HLT and the ICTF and also direct interstate access to I-26, is underway. The project also includes new roadway connections and existing roadway improvements to surrounding surface streets.
- **Inland port development** – Inland ports are dry ports that help relieve pressure off of sea ports by acting as a storage or distribution point. Inland Port Greer (operational 2013) serves the Upstate region by Norfolk Southern rail, and Inland Port Dillon (operational 2018) serves the Pee Dee region by CSX rail.
- **Wando Welch terminal improvements** – Includes building upgrades, crane upgrades and new crane acquisitions to serve Super-Post-Panamax ships, traffic Yard improvements and chassis Yard relocation.
- **Other improvements** – Information technology enhancements including new terminal operating system, equipment upgrades, and paving and infrastructure enhancements at various port terminals.
8.7 RAIL FACILITIES

8.7.1 Rail Freight and Passenger Rail

Railroads play an essential role in the region’s transportation network. Railroads in the region are primarily freight lines with limited passenger rail service. There are two Class I railroads operating in the City of North Charleston: CSX Transportation (CSX), formerly Seaboard Road System, and Norfolk Southern Railway (NS). CSX rail is South Carolina’s largest railroad, representing roughly 56 percent of the state’s rail system. It owns and operates two rail lines that are parallel to the east of Rivers Avenue (serving the North Charleston Transit Center) and North Rhett Avenue, and an east-west line running south of Montague Avenue (serving CSX’s Bennett Yard/Ashley Junction Intermodal Yard).

In addition to the rail mileage it owns, CSX also has tracking rights on the NS line between Charleston and Columbia. Norfolk Southern Railway is the second largest rail carrier in the state, representing roughly 30 percent of the state’s rail system. Its main rail line runs parallel to the I-26 and US-78 corridors. Both carriers provide a vital connection to and from the region’s port facilities and provide long-haul rail services across the state and country.

Passenger rail services are available through Amtrak on their Palmetto service from New York-Washington-Savannah and Silver Meteor service from New York-Washington-Miami, both stop in North Charleston at the Gaynor Avenue North Charleston Transit Center station. Amtrak operates on CSX’s rail lines through an agreement between companies, and trips are scheduled so as to avoid any conflicts between trains.

Palmetto Railways, previously South Carolina Public Railways (SCPR), provides terminal switching short-haul services and operates three rail divisions, one of which operates in North Charleston. The North Charleston Subdivision, formally Port Terminal Railroad, provides service to the South Carolina Ports Authority North Charleston Terminal and the Charleston Naval Complex. Palmetto Railways’ rail facilitates interchange traffic with both CSX and NS. North Charleston is also home to other major rail facilities for both Class I carriers. CSX has its principal yard and intermodal facility (Bennett Yard / Ashley Junction Intermodal Yard) in the City and NS has its intermodal facility (7-Mile Intermodal Yard) and automotive distribution terminal in North Charleston as well.

The existing rail intermodal facilities operate at high volumes and are at or near capacity. Due to the lack of land surrounding both the CSX and NS intermodal Yards, facility expansion of these sites is constrained. In order to keep pace with and accommodate the projected future intermodal growth, Palmetto Railways is developing the Navy Base Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) project. The ICTF project is sited on a 150-acre site near Hobson Avenue and Viaduct Road on the former Charleston Naval Complex (CNC) in North Charleston. This intermodal facility will be located near the new Hugh Leatherman Terminal (HLT) to provide near-dock rail service, will provide equal access for both Class I rails via north and south rail connections, and will include additional off-site improvements including a limited-access drayage road which connects to HLT, a new overpass connecting Cosgrove Avenue to McMillan Avenue, removal of the Viaduct Road overpass, and improvements to Bainbridge and Hobson Avenues, as illustrated in Figure 59. The proposed drayage road connection between the container terminal and intermodal facility, the Port Access Road connection between the HLT and I-26, and restricted truck turn movements into and out of the ICTF would limit truck traffic use of the surrounding surface streets. However, as these facilities are

constructed and begin operation, it would be important to monitor the truck circulation patterns and road facility uses to ensure local neighborhoods are protected from truck freight movements and unforeseen negative externalities are addressed. Similarly, the planned Navy Base ICTF project will impact rail traffic.

In 2018, the US Army Corp of Engineers completed the Navy Base ICTF Final Environmental Impact Study (FEIS), which provides the major impacts generated by the permitted ICTF project alternative. The FEIS found that the proposed ICTF project will have little impact on the majority of the analyzed intersections in North Charleston compared to the No-Build alternative. The proposed project alternative was found to improve operations of the Hobson Avenue and McMillan Avenue intersection and Spruill Avenue and McMillan Avenue intersections due to the inclusion of mitigation measures such as lane geometry improvements. The study also found that the realignment of the Cosgrove Avenue/McMillan Avenue overpass will have a positive impact on the Spruill Avenue and McMillan Avenue intersection because the overpass will shift traffic away from the intersection. The FEIS however found that the proposed project will have adverse effects on the Spruill Avenue at Cosgrove Avenue/McMillan Avenue realigned intersection, the Noisette Boulevard at Turnbull Avenue intersection, the Noisette Boulevard at Cosgrove Avenue/McMillan Avenue realigned intersection, the Hobson Avenue and McMillan Avenue intersection (due to higher traffic volumes generated from ICTF employee traffic and roadway network modifications), and the stop-controlled Noisette Boulevard at Cosgrove Avenue/McMillan Avenue realigned intersection.

Figure 59: Navy Base ICTP Proposed Alternative
The proposed ICTF project includes dual rail line access for both rail carriers from the north and south of the intermodal Yard. This will include the construction of new rail lines to the north of the facility that connects to the existing active Palmetto Rail North Charleston Terminal line and a southern line which connects to the existing rail line near Herbert Street in the City of Charleston. Construction of this southern spur will create a new rail crossing along a major thoroughfare (US-78) in the City of Charleston. A detailed analysis of the impact of the ICTF rail operations on the system at select crossings will be completed in the North Charleston Surface Transportation Impact Study (2019).

8.7.2 Highway Freight Facilities

Freight movement through North Charleston is accomplished by trains and trucks, with the larger share occurring by truck on the existing roadway network. Providing an efficient and safe network for the movement of goods is a priority to maintain the quality of life of residents and to support the economic vitality of the region. Figure 59 provides the National Highway Freight Network and Statewide Freight Road Network in North Charleston. These strategic freight corridors have been identified as critical in the movement of goods in the region and the efficiencies of these corridors support and advance State and national economic goals. The major North Charleston freight corridors include the I-26 and I-526 corridors, Remount Road and Montague Avenue intermodal connection corridors, and Highways 78 and 52. Stakeholder feedback from the freight and goods movement community collected during the development of the region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) identified the need to not only address congestion on these freight corridors but more specifically to improve incident management practices and integrate more intelligent transportation solutions (ITS) on the freight network to improve system operation and reliability. There are also opportunities to improve local corridor access to freight related or freight intensive land uses such as manufacturing, industrial, warehousing and distribution uses. Roadways such as Ashley Phosphate Road, Cross County Road, Palmetto Commerce Parkway, Leeds Avenue, Dorchester Road and Azalea Drive (identified in the Neck Area Plan) which support concentrated freight uses presents an opportunity to provide more reliable freight connectivity and movement in North Charleston.
Figure 60: North Charleston Rail, Port and Intermodal Facilities
8.8 AIRPORT FACILITIES

The Charleston International Airport (CHS) is one of three public airports owned and operated by the Charleston County Aviation Authority (CCAA), under a joint Use Agreement with the U.S. Air Force and Joint Base Charleston which owns, maintains and operates the shared runways, taxiways and navigational facilities. This major airport, located in North Charleston, is the busiest in South Carolina and connects millions of annual visitors. In 2018, the busiest year on record, the airport accommodated roughly 4.5 million passengers. As such, the City of North Charleston provides a first impression of the region and serves as the gateway to the Lowcountry.

The airport terminal has two concourses (A and B) and is classified as a security-level Category I airport by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Major passenger carriers serving the facility include Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, British Airways, Delta, Frontier Airlines, JetBlue, Southwest, United Airlines, and Allegiant Airs. Boeing South Carolina also operates a major manufacturing and delivery site which occupies roughly 730 acres on the south side of the airport campus.

Charleston International Airport, under the direction of its Airport Master Plan “CHS: Vision 2030”, recently underwent a four-year effort completed in 2016, to upgrade its facilities to accommodate the steady growth in passenger travel experienced since 2010 (Figure 61). Implementation of its Terminal Redevelopment and Improvement Program (TRIP) is aimed at increasing the capacity of the Airport by approximately 50 percent to accommodate the future growth in airport activities. Improvements include modernization of the terminal building, existing concourse expansion and new concourse construction, construction of a new parking deck and development of a new Airport Connector Road that will provide increased access to the airport. This new roadway construction will not only impact how passengers and workers access the facility from surrounding roadways (Dorchester Road and I-526) but would also impact general travel patterns in the area. Increased access and connectivity to the facility is also supported by taxi/shuttle services including ride share or transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft, hotel shuttles, rental car services and a new bus shelter.


![Figure 61: CHS Annual Passenger Activity (2010-2018)](image-url)
8.9 PLANNED AND APPROVED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) urbanized area. All federal funds in the urban area of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties are administered through the CHATS Policy Committee. The Policy Committee is a policy-making body formed of elected officials from all three counties who make decisions concerning transportation policies and prioritize and allocate federal dollars to transportation projects in the entire Census-defined urbanized area, as well as those areas expected to be urbanized over the next 20 years. North Charleston falls completely within the urbanized area of the region.

In 2019, the CHATS Policy Committee adopted the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). LRTP identifies regionally significant transportation projects, evaluates and prioritizes projects based local goals and preferences, and allocates funds to the highest ranked projects identified as most critical to the development of the region’s transportation system. The projects are evaluated and ranked in accordance to the South Carolina Legislatures Act 114 with objective transportation criteria and then placed in a fiscally constrained projects list. The fiscally constrained project list helps to plan for long term transportation needs at the regional level. Figure 62 and the associated Table 22 show the projects that were scored and prioritized from the 2040 LRTP. North Charleston has four capacity enhancement projects, five intersection projects, and one corridor study that are included on the fiscally constrained list. The projects in Table 22 are either fully or partly within North Charleston.

As future funding becomes available, the fiscally-constrained project list begins to funnel projects into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP identifies when a project will start by year and how much funding it will receive by each phase of work (planning, preliminary engineering, rights-of-way, utility, and construction). A project enters the TIP when it has been fully funded. Each year CHATS receives about $19 million in federal funds for transportation projects. The first three projects in the fiscally constrained list are located within North Charleston and total approximately $53.5 million. Using federal dollars to fund projects comes with a 20% local match requirement; 20% of $53.5 million is approximately $10.7 million in local funding that would be needed to move the projects in to the TIP.
Figure 62: CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan Fiscally Constrained and Visionary Projects in North Charleston
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANKING</th>
<th>LRTP PROJECT ID</th>
<th>ROADWAY FACILITY</th>
<th>PROJECT TYPE</th>
<th>LIMITS</th>
<th>SCDOT FUNCTIONAL CLASS</th>
<th>LENGTH (MILES)</th>
<th>COST (1000S)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>&quot;Principal Arterial &amp; Local&quot;</td>
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<td>North Rhett Avenue</td>
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<td>&quot;Principal Arterial &amp; Major Collector&quot;</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>&quot;US-17 &amp; Anna Knapp Blvd.&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Principal Arterial &amp; Local&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Intersection Improvement&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Principal Arterial &amp; Major Collector&quot;</td>
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<td>$2,000</td>
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<td>&quot;Principal Arterial &amp; Minor Arterial/ Local&quot;</td>
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<td>SCDOT FUNCTIONAL CLASS</td>
<td>LENGTH (MILES)</td>
<td>COST (1000S)</td>
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<td>Ashley Phosphate Road</td>
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<td>&quot;Principal Arterials&quot;</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
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<td>&quot;US-17 / Ravenel Bridge Southbound Approach&quot;</td>
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<td>Magrath Darby Blvd. to Wingo Way On-Ramp</td>
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<td>&quot;US-17 / Ravenel Bridge Northbound Off-Ramp&quot;</td>
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<td>SCDOT FUNCTIONAL CLASS</td>
<td>LENGTH (MILES)</td>
<td>COST (1000$)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>P-129</td>
<td>North Main Street</td>
<td>Access Management</td>
<td>&quot;5th Street to Berlin Myers Parkway&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Principal Arterial“</td>
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<td>Savannah Highway</td>
<td>Access Management</td>
<td>Wesley Drive to I-526</td>
<td>&quot;Principal Arterial“</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>P-103</td>
<td>&quot;US-78 / University Blvd. &amp; Medical Plaza Drive&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Intersection Improvement&quot;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>&quot;Principal Arterial &amp; Local“</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: BCDCOG

Table 22: CHATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Fiscally Constrained Project List

### 8.10 SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

#### 8.10.1 Lowcountry Rapid Transit

The Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) is the locally preferred transit alternative identified and recommended as a result of the 2016 I-26 ALT Study – a 15-month analysis to identify a viable fixed guideway transit solution to reduce traffic congestion and improve mobility in the region. The LCRT is a bus rapid transit system that operates in its own dedicated guideway or in mixed traffic. The line will originate in Summerville and end in downtown Charleston, with an estimated 60-minute one-way travel time. The plan is to have approximately 18 stations (some with park and ride lots), transit hubs, and neighborhood stops serving major activity centers in the region. The service will provide a fast and reliable alternative, with busses running every ten minutes during weekday peak travel periods and twenty minutes in the off peak. The LCRT is especially important to North Charleston since it has the potential to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment along Rivers Avenue, University Boulevard, and Highway 78. Development of the LCRT corridor has the potential to impact not only roadway infrastructure and operations (through priority signal technologies) but will also impact land use and development patterns in North Charleston with the introduction of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) concepts especially at station locations as provided in Figure 63.

#### 8.10.2 Airport Connector Road

The Airport Connector Road will provide a new direct access road to Charleston International Airport and should relieve traffic congestion by providing a new connection from Dorchester Road to Montague Avenue near the Mark Clark Expressway (I-526). The initial concept is to build over three miles of a new, four-lane road, which will provide locals and visitors with a new route to the airport.

#### 8.10.3 Palmetto Commerce Parkway Phase III (PCP3)

The PCP3 project will provide the last segment in a new connector parkway from Ladson Road to Aviation Ave near I-26 and the Joint Base Charleston. It will relieve traffic congestion by providing a new three mile connection from Ashley Phosphate Road to Aviation Avenue, as well as improve approximately two miles of South Aviation Avenue. The initial concept for the PCP3 project is to build more than three miles of a new four-lane road, while improving an additional two miles of the of the road, to provide better distribution of traffic in the area north of the I-26/I-526 Interchange road, to provide better distribution of traffic in the area north of the I-26/I-526 Interchange.
8.10.4 Palmetto Commerce Interchange (PCI)

The PCI project will ultimately construct a new interchange on I-26 between US 78 (University Boulevard) and Ashley Phosphate Road, which will provide a new westerly connection to Palmetto Commerce Parkway, Weber Boulevard, and Northside Drive. The purpose is to provide a connection from I-26 to a new network of roads between Ladson Road and Ashley Phosphate Road in order to relieve major traffic congestion along these heavily congested roads and along this busy segment of I-26.

PCI will build a new I-26 interchange and approximately 0.5-miles of a new four-lane road, which will provide motorists with additional route options within the currently congested area. In addition to alternative travel routes, PCI will provide access for future development upon approximately 1,000 acres of adjacent property. When complete, the interchange is expected to improve safety and serve as a direct route for workers who are traveling to various facilities in and nearby Palmetto Commerce Park.

8.10.5 I-526 Lowcountry Corridor (LCC)

The I-526 Lowcountry Corridor, a 23-mile corridor between West Ashley and Mount Pleasant, has been identified by SCDOT as one of the state’s most congested interstate highways and is among the Department’s top priorities statewide. This interstate corridor is critical to mobility within the region and is important to daily commuting traffic, other travelers, as well as freight movements to and from the Port of Charleston. The LCC project will address the growing demand for capacity on this interstate which has resulted in increased congestion along this major corridor.

The I-526 Lowcountry Corridor project has been broken down into two distinct projects – I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West, which extends from south of Paul Cantrell Boulevard in West Ashley to Virginia Avenue in North Charleston, and I-526 Lowcountry Corridor East from Virginia Avenue to south of US-17 in Mount Pleasant. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is currently being developed for the LLC West project which seeks to increase capacity and improve operations at the I-26 and I-526 interchange and along the I-526 mainline within the study area. In addition to the I-526 and I-26 interchange, this project will potentially impact the operation of multiple North Charleston interchanges including I-526 and Leeds Avenue, I-526 and Dorchester Road, I-526 and Montague Avenue, I-526 and International Boulevard, and I-526 and Rivers Avenue. The study will evaluate a range of possible solutions which includes increased lanes, implementation of new technologies, and other strategies. This project schedule has an anticipated construction date of 2022. The LLC East project is currently a planning study.

8.10.6 I-26 Corridor

Improvement to the capacity and operation of I-26 is also important to the mobility and economic vitality of the region. The SCDOT has identified within their Ten-Year Plan, capacity improvements along the I-26 Corridor from I-526 to the new Port Access Road (anticipated construction 2026). The Department is also currently developing the I-26 Corridor Management Plan (CMP) between Ridgeville (Exit 187) and Charleston (US-17). The CMP will evaluate and vet improvements (capacity and traffic operational improvements) and strategies (travel demand management and modal strategies) that will reduce congestion and improve the overall operation and safety of the I-26 corridor within the region.

Figure 63: Significant North Charleston Projects