

Upstate traffic is still bad, South Carolina roads are still deadly

Jay King | September 28, 2021



Despite increased funding to improve South Carolina's roads and bridges like widening work seen here along I-85 in Spartanburg County, congestion remains an issue on Upstate roads.

South Carolina roads and bridges are in better shape than they've been in years but funding challenges remain, according to a [report](#) released Sept. 22 by TRIP, a D.C.-based transportation research nonprofit.

The TRIP report, "**Moving South Carolina Forward: Providing a Modern, Sustainable Transportation System in the Palmetto State,**" finds roads and bridges construction and maintenance has substantially improved the upkeep of state transportation infrastructure since state lawmakers Spassed Act 40 in 2017 that dedicated a half-billion dollars to the effort.



SC's roads ... still deadly

But safety remains a challenge.

More than 5,000 people died in South Carolina car crashes between 2015 and 2019 according to the report and in 2019, we led the nation with 1.73 fatalities per per 100 million vehicle miles. The numbers are even worse on rural roads, where 3.46 people died per 100 million vehicle miles in 2019.

Greenville's traffic ... still congested

The study found the GSA metro area remains congested, and it's costing drivers money and time. Two of the state's most congested sections of interstate are in the Upstate — I-385 around Woodruff Road and I-85 around S.C. 14.

Other notable findings include:

- Drivers lose about \$615 per year in time and wasted fuel due to congestion

- Drivers sacrifice about 26 hours annually to traffic and an average of 12 gallons of fuel



Progress on road, bridge maintenance

S.C. Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Secretary Christy Hall said the report confirms progress is being made.

"Today's report from the National TRIP organization reinforces what South Carolinians are seeing on our roads each day — active road improvement projects and work zones in all 46 counties," Hall said. "Thanks to the investments by the General Assembly in the 2017 Roads Bill, SCDOT has been able to triple our construction work."

[Related – Making the Grade: Greenville's aging roads and bridges pose a unique problem](#)

[The Scoop with Amy Doyle: The road repaving list is out. Is your road on it? \(June 2021\)](#)

Chart 3. Pavement conditions on major roads in South Carolina's largest urban areas and statewide.

Location	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Charleston	16%	28%	19%	37%
Columbia	11%	29%	19%	41%
Florence	22%	31%	19%	28%
GSA Metro	20%	28%	18%	34%
Myrtle Beach	24%	29%	13%	34%

Source: TRIP analysis of Federal Highway Administration data.

The report notes that since 2018, SCDOT has started about 4,000 miles of paving projects.

Highlights of the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson metro area include:

- 20% of roads are in poor condition
- 28% of roads are in mediocre condition
- 18% of major roads are in fair condition
- 34% of major roads are in good condition
- 7% of bridges are rated as poor-structurally deficient

Statewide, 8% of bridges are rated poor/structurally deficient.

Since 2018, [SCDOT](#) has started repairing 211 of the 465 state-maintained bridges that were in poor condition or load-restricted.

But the state is falling behind. Based on current funding, [SCDOT](#) anticipates nearly 1,000 [state-maintained bridges](#) will be in poor or load-restricted condition by 2040.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MiJynp2FsjBEk2zsl58bx10_OZlIme3m3K/view