



**Chatham County Transportation Advisory Board
2011-2013 Strategic Plan**

Draft February 22, 2011

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

On February 1, 2010, the Board of Commissioners approved the bylaws of a Transportation Advisory Board (TAB). The TAB consists of 11 voting members, appointed by the Commissioners after completion of an open application process and review by a selection committee. Six non-voting memberships were approved and were to be appointed by their respective entities, including Pittsboro, Siler City, Goldston, Cary, Chatham Transit Network, and Chatham County. Tom Vanderbeck was the Commissioner’s liaison to the TAB. A selection committee reviewed the applications and recommended the appointment of all 11 applicants as satisfying the requirements of the bylaws. The selection committee included Chatham County Sustainable Transportation Planner, a representative of the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization and Chatham County Acting Planning Director. The TAB’s by-laws were drafted by the Sustainable Transportation Planner and approved by the Board of Commissioners (BOC).

Voting members represent all five commissioner districts as well as the following transportation “interest areas”: environment, social, non-motorized, economic, public safety, public transportation, and personal motor vehicle.

Mission and Vision

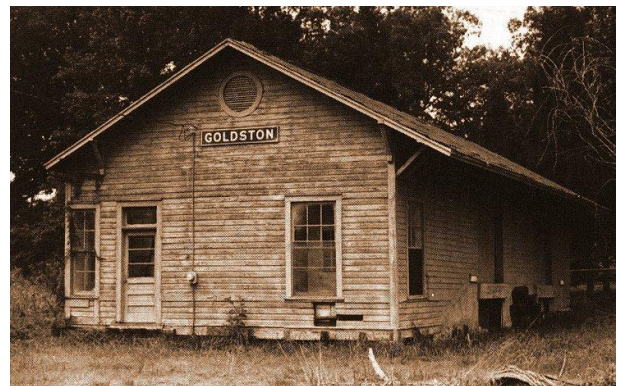
Educate and advise the Board of Commissioners and serve as a venue for public discourse in all matters related to transportation – including the impact on public health, economics, environment, inclusiveness, education and quality of life – in order to achieve a sustainable, multi-modal transportation system that provides mobility and access for people and goods.

Purpose of This Plan

The Chatham County Transportation Advisory Board’s Strategic Plan provides a “roadmap” for board members in accomplishing the mission of the Board over the next four years. It is a dynamic document that helps the Board assess, anticipate and address transportation issues and effectively communicate its intentions to the Board of Commissioners, other advisory boards, government and community-based organizations, businesses and the public.

History

Chatham Counties organized transportation began in the middle 1800’s. The roads were referred to as “farmer’s railroad.” They were designed to be all weather roads that could meet the real needs of the agricultural county. In 1895 the Dunlap brothers built



a railroad that was used to transport lumber harvested throughout southern Chatham County. Over the last 100 years railroad lines have extended from Wake County to municipalities in Chatham County from Pittsboro, to Siler City.



Early in the 19th century, North Carolina already had the reputation as “The Good Roads State” due to its emphasis on creating a network of highways with access to all 100 counties. In 1931, the state legislature took over construction and maintenance of all county roads in an effort to relieve county governments of this burden. To this day, North Carolina counties rely on NC DOT for road and highway planning, design, construction, and maintenance outside of municipalities. (<http://www.city-data.com/states/North-Carolina-Transportation.html>)

Roadways continued to develop through the county connecting the increasing populations from the Piedmont Triad and the Research Triangle. As traffic congestion has increased, many attempts by the NC DOT have been made to increase the size and capacity of the roadways connecting to Orange, Wake and Durham counties.

The Chatham Transit Network was formed as the county’s first consolidated public transportation service in 1995. A public bus system connecting to Chatham County was first proposed in 1997 and finally brought into fruition in 2008 with the Chapel Hill Transit PX Bus route.

Chapter 2: Current Conditions in Chatham

This section briefly describes the transportation patterns of Chatham County residents and visitors. In addition, the section highlights the current status of the county's transportation system, including the built environment infrastructure, local/regional services, plans, policies, and funding.

A. Transportation Patterns/Trends

Basic Demographics

While a portion of Northeast Chatham County is part of the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), it is generally considered a rural county. The county is 682 square miles with a population density that is roughly half that of North Carolina (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37037.html>). The 2009 population was estimated at 64,772, indicating a 30% increase from the 2000 US Census and nearly twice the estimated growth rate of North Carolina. 71.3% of Chatham residents consider themselves White, 12.9% Black, 12.7% Hispanic, 2.2% Asian, 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and 1% more than one race. In 2000, 10.7% of Chatham residents spoke a language other than English and 8.7% were foreign born; both of these characteristics were higher than the state averages. Estimated median household income for 2008 was \$57,677, 24% higher than North Carolina. 10.8% of Chatham residents live below the poverty line, compared with 14.6% of state residents.

Car Ownership and Licensed Drivers

According to the US Census, Chatham County averages two cars per household; 4% of households in the county have no vehicle. 30% of North Carolinians do not drive because of their age, choice, disability, or cannot afford a car; 12% of the NC residents of driving age do not drive. (Source: US DOT, FWHA, <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2008/dl20.cfm>)

Commuting to Work

Nine out of ten working Chatham residents commute to work by car, 77% drive alone and 14% as carpoolers (out of all workers). Of the remaining Chatham workers, 5% work from home, 2% walk to work, 1% use public transportation, and a combined 1.5% use either taxi, motorcycle, bicycle, or other mode. All forms of travel to work increased from 2000 to 2005-2007 with the exception of carpooling, which saw a decline in this reported mode.



Table 1 - Commuting to Work, 2005-2007

Travel Mode to Work	Number	Percent	Increase since 2000?
Drive alone	22,313	76.6	Yes
Carpool	3,992	13.7	No
Walk	627	2.2	Yes
Taxi, motorcycle, bicycle, other	448	1.5	Yes
Public transportation	288	1.0	Yes
Worked at home	1,453	5.0	Yes
Total Workers	29,121	100	Yes

Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007, Census Transportation Planning Package
http://download.ctpp.transportation.org/profiles_2005-2007/ctpp_profiles.html

Journey-to-Work Flows, Chatham and Surrounding Counties, 2000

According to the 2000 Census, 12,510 Chatham County residents commuted to work in one of the eight neighboring counties. Orange County experienced the highest number of Chatham commuters, many of whom were employed at UNC Chapel Hill and UNC Hospitals. Wake and Durham counties also drew many residents for employment, followed by Lee, which provided the highest number of commuters into Chatham. The county experienced equivalent in- and out-commuting levels for Lee, Randolph, and Alamance counties. While the numbers were relatively small, many more Moore and Harnett residents commuted into Chatham than the reverse. (Also see map in Appendix 1)

Table 2 – Commuting To/From Neighboring Counties

County	From Chatham	Into Chatham
Orange	4,206	792
Wake	2,743	873
Durham	2,739	349
Lee	1,413	1,383
Randolph	884	832
Alamance	349	346
Moore	150	398
Harnett	26	248
Total	12,510	5,221

B. Built Environment/Infrastructure

Existing Roads and Highways

Chatham County’s transportation infrastructure is similar to many North Carolina rural counties, consisting of a handful of four lane divided highways (primary arterials), many rural two lane roads (minor arterials and collectors), and a limited number of town-owned local streets within municipalities. Like all counties in North Carolina, Chatham County government does not build or maintain any of the

roads within its boundaries. Virtually all arterial and collector roads are state owned roads that were built, improved, and maintained by the NC Department of Transportation (DOT).



(See Appendices 2 and 3)

Chatham County has benefitted from highway upgrades in recent years. Significant highway projects within the past decade include:

- US 15-501, between Pittsboro and Chapel Hill, is the county's most significant commuting corridor. The road was widened and upgraded from a two lane rural highway to a four lane divided highway, which now connects the US 64 bypass to NC 54 in Chapel Hill.
- US 64 Pittsboro Bypass was constructed as an expressway route to direct east/west traffic away from the downtown traffic circle. The new configuration bypasses Pittsboro to the north and provides interchanges at NC 87 and US 15-501. The full extent of US 64 serves as connection for commuters and travelers in and through Siler City and Pittsboro; it also provides a link eastward to Apex, Cary, and Raleigh and westward to Asheboro.
- US 421 was expanded to a continuous four lane divided highway through the county. The highway connects Sanford, Siler City, and northward into Randolph County and the Triad area.

Non Motorized Facilities

The transportation infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, those using wheelchairs and others not utilizing automobiles or other motor vehicles is limited within Chatham County. Nearly all non-motorized facilities are limited to Siler City and Pittsboro. While NC DOT may construct sidewalks along state roads within towns' limits, department policy stipulates that municipalities are responsible for on-going sidewalk maintenance. As a result sidewalks are rarely present outside municipal boundaries. One recent exception was the newly constructed sidewalk along US 15-501 from Mann's Chapel Rd. to the UNC Commuter Lot and alongside the congested Cole Park Plaza. This project was primarily supported by federal Stimulus funds controlled by the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).



NC DOT's Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation developed the Bicycling Highways system and mapping program with nine routes covering 3,000 miles of state roads. Two of these statewide



bicycle highways traverse through Chatham County. Bicycle Highway #1 (Carolina Connector) runs for nine miles in Chatham and six miles of Bicycle Highway #2 (Mountains to Sea) passes through the county. NC DOT has marked three additional signed bicycle routes for Chatham, routes #3, #4, and #5, which range in length from 34 to 37 miles. The NC Bicycling Highways and other signed bike routes are primarily intended for recreational bicyclists, which is why most routes utilize low-traffic rural routes.

Chatham County does not currently have any striped bike lanes, which are often preferred by novice riders. Wide outside lanes and highway shoulders are available on many of the county's arterials and collectors but their presence is inconsistent. The significant potential commuting corridors, e.g. 15-501 North, feature wide shoulders that are used by bicyclists despite the relatively high speeds of motor vehicles.

Transit Facilities

Chatham County has one significant public transit facility, the UNC Chapel Hill Transit Park & Ride lot, which is located near the border with Orange County on US 15/501 North. This lot was built to accommodate members of the UNC Commuter Alternative Program and provide a transportation alternative for Chatham residents working at UNC. The Chapel Hill Transit PX bus route does not have a fixed transit facility other than the Lowe's Home Improvement parking lot. This lot is located one mile north of the Pittsboro Courthouse, on US 15/501 North, and serves as a Park & Ride.



Off Road-Greenways

The American Tobacco Trail (ATT), a former railway line, extends for 22 miles from Durham southward into Chatham and Wake Counties. Four miles of the trail passes through Chatham County with a dual surface of asphalt and compacted screenings. The trail is open for foot, bike and equestrian use. The trail crosses Northeast Creek and O'Kelly Chapel Road, past the Old Chatham Golf Course. It also traverses the end of Pittard Sears Road, Panther Creek, and continues past New Hope Church Road. Most street crossings allow on-road parking. While the ATT is primarily a recreational facility with significant weekend use, the various road crossings give the trail the potential for use as a non motorized transportation corridor. Other recreational trails in Chatham County can be found at the following site: <http://www.chathamnc.org/Index.aspx?page=708>.

C. Public Transportation Services

Chatham Transit Network

Chatham Transit Network provides transportation service available to all county residents. CTN operates under the Triangle Rural Planning Organization (TARPO) Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan. CTN is the county's primary public transportation provider, with both fixed route and subscription transit. The organization is an independent (501c3) non-profit agency with its own Board of Directors.



CTN provides the majority of the County's subscription transportation service, possessing service contracts with agencies including Central Carolina Community College, Chatham County Department of Social Services, Chatham County Health Department, Chatham County Partnership for Children, Chatham County Together, Chatham Trades, Inc., Family Resource Center, Laurels of Chatham, Lee County

Industries, Siler City Care and Rehabilitation, and others. CTN receives some private funding to provide public transportation throughout the County but does not operate on weekends or evenings.

See Appendix 4 for additional details on CTN and other providers available to Chatham residents.

Sister-to-Sister – Siler City

Sister-to-Sister has provided transportation services for residents of Chatham County since March of 2001. The populations currently served are the elderly and disabled. All services are door-to-door from homes in deep rural areas of Chatham County to doctor's appointments, beauty and barber shops, bank, grocery stores, school, employment development sites, and other necessary services. All drivers are drug screened, certified safe drivers by the State of North Carolina, and are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Sister-to-Sister currently employs 10 three-quarter time people who have been with the Chatham County Schools, Chatham Transit Network, Chatham Trades, Chatham Hospital, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Health Department and the Council on Aging.

Sister-to-Sister owns 16 vehicles; 5, 15 passenger vans, 2 with wheelchair lifts, 6, 7-8 passenger mini-vans, and 5, 4-5 passenger cars. They currently serve approximately 70 transit clients per day.

Sister to Sister provides some similar service but also fills in where CTN is not operational. This might be due to time of day, day of week or also due to the service required. They also have more bilingual staff. Examples of such services provided by Sister to Sister include late night hospital discharge, or weekend trips, such as shopping trips, visits or worship services.

Sister to Sister also provide additional accessibility to those with physical or mental impairments, such as physical assistance to get from inside the home to the accessible van or bus. CTN is not authorized and does not have the required resources to provide this level of service and still meet broader demands.

There are limited additional specialized transportation services such as one through the Therapeutic Alternatives agency which has a contract to provide a limited amount of direct transportation to clients (*through CTN or paid for by DHSS?*). Therapeutic Alternatives also has Mobile Crisis Management Units.

Public Vanpool Services

Chatham commuters are served by two public transportation agencies offering vanpool arrangement to commuters: Triangle Transit and Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation. Commuters learn if there is a vanpool they can use, or register their interest through a free statewide database housed through the GoTriangle.org website. These vans make agreements to park at shopping centers, churches or other central locations where riders meet to board.



Thompson & Little Transportation (TLT) - Bear Creek

Thompson and Little have been providing transportation services in Chatham County since 2008. They are an incorporated 501©3 company that offers contract services for Chatham County Schools, CCCC – Sanford Campus, Vocational Rehab and some private clients. The services offered through Chatham County Schools consist of the Exceptional Children’s Program, the Homeless Student Program and School Choice.

TLT covers Pittsboro, Siler City, Bonlee, and North Chatham. Their hours of operation are from 6:00AM – 5:00PM with some afterhours work serving Vocational Rehab work sites and the Community College in Sanford. They currently own 3 cars and 4 vans. Thus far, they are not doing any business with Chatham Transit, but would like to.

Chapel Hill Transit (CHT)

Chapel Hill Transit’s free-at-boarding CCX route serves the Chatham Park & Ride and connects to UNC. While the CCX route is available to the public, including Chatham residents, the Chatham Park & Ride itself, was built to provide free parking for members of UNC’s Commuter Alternative Program. Members of this program are affiliated with the UNC University or Hospital and do not park on UNC’s Campus.

The lot serves the community by keeping the UNC-affiliated from parking in surrounding neighborhoods. However, the lot is not open to the public. So those not affiliated with UNC wishing to use the CCX must park elsewhere and access the lot on foot.

Chapel Hill Transit’s PX route connects Pittsboro to UNC’s campus and has designated bus stops just south of the Courthouse in the traffic circle and in the Park & Ride portion of Lowes Home Improvement parking lot. The bus fare is \$3 per ride. Monthly passes can be purchased for \$60. By agreement between CTN and CHT, those holding a PX pass may also use CTN’s Siler City routes to commute to campus. Members of UNC’s Commuter Alternative program (CAP), may opt to hold a pass allowing unlimited rides on the PX route in exchange for not parking on campus.

Despite the availability of these transportation services, significant gaps remain. Examples include

- ◆ Older adults living in the northeast section of Chatham have difficulty getting to daycare and other resources available to them using Sister to Sister or CTN.

- ◆ Additional bilingual outreach
- ◆ Disease Management Class transportation

D. Transportation Policy and Planning

Master plans

Chatham’s proximity to the Triangle has resulted in the county’s, and particularly Northeast Chatham’s, inclusion in various regional transportation plans. Chatham County is included in the Regional Transit Blueprint sponsored by the Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization, Triangle J Council of Governments, Triangle Transit Authority, and other agencies. The Blueprint initiative includes a transit plan and analyses of infrastructure development and land use. The Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization regularly works with Chatham, Lee, Moore, and Orange counties to develop transportation funding and construction priorities for NC DOT’s State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which determines the state roads to be improved within the four county region. The Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization plays a similar role to TARPO in the STIP process but only for North Chatham.

In addition, NC DOT has developed various reports and plans that include Chatham County. These are the Statewide Transportation, Triangle Region Transportation Development, and Statewide Highway Corridor plans. Most recently, NC DOT has developed a corridor study and plan for US 64 East of



Pittsboro to the Wake County border. This plan proposes short and long term highway and intersection modifications with the ultimate goal of relieving the I-40/I-85 corridor of traffic between Raleigh and Charlotte.

Pittsboro is in the process of developing a thoroughfare plan with NC DOT. The town developed and adopted a pedestrian master plan in 2009. (See Appendix 5)

Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization

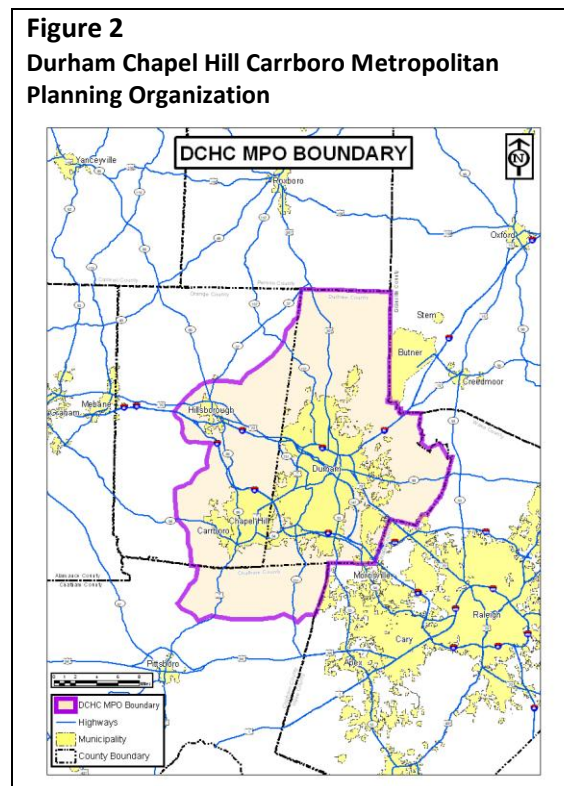
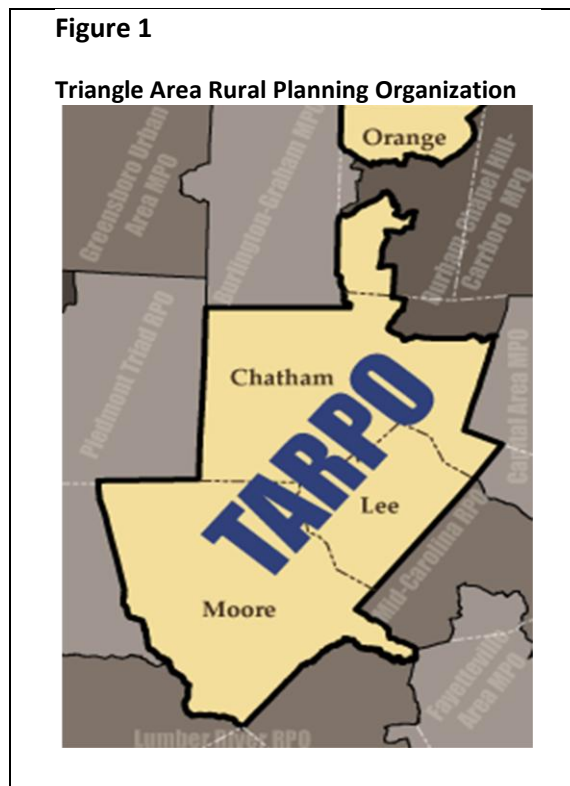
In 2000, North Carolina’s established rural planning organizations (RPOs) in order to provide non-urbanized communities with a larger collective influence as NC DOT determines transportation planning and capital financing decisions. RPOs are voluntary associations of local governments that plan rural transportation systems and advise the NCDOT on regional transportation projects and priorities.

The Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization (TARPO) is an association of local governments in Chatham, Lee, Moore, and a portion of Orange. (See Figure 1) TARPO also has member representation by Pittsboro, Siler City and other municipalities within the four counties. TARPO's main goals are:

- i. Developing long-range local and regional multimodal transportation plans with NCDOT.
- ii. Prioritizing suggestions for transportation projects to be included in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).
- iii. Providing transportation-related information and data to the public and private sectors.
- iv. Encouraging public participation in the transportation planning process.

Annual Planning Work Programs (PWP) and budgets determine the specific tasks of the TARPO staff. More information can be found at www.tarpo.org.

TARPO is served by two standing committees, the Rural Technical Advisory Committee (RTAC) and the Rural Technical Coordinating Committee (RTCC). “The RTAC is responsible for keeping the policy boards informed of the status and requirements of the transportation planning process; assisting in the dissemination and clarification of the decisions, inclinations, and policies of the policy boards; and helping to ensure meaningful public participation in the transportation planning process.” This committee is currently chaired by Pittsboro Mayor Randolph Voller; **Chatham County Commissioner Sally Kost is also a member of the RTAC**. The RTCC “is responsible for the general review, guidance and coordination of the transportation planning process,” and is represented by the Chatham County manager, transportation planner, planning director, and director of Chatham Transit Network.



Durham Chapel Hill Carrboro MPO (Northeast Chatham)

The Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC-MPO) is the regional organization responsible for transportation planning for the western part of the Research Triangle area in North Carolina. The DCHC urbanized area covers all of Durham County, a portion of Orange County including the Towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough, and Northeast Chatham County (See Figure 2).

Similar to TARPO, the DCHC-MPO is an umbrella organization comprised of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), local governments, and the State. The TAC, designated by the Governor, is a policy body that coordinates and makes decision on transportation planning issues. Chatham is represented on the TAC with one seat for a county commissioner and one alternate.

North Carolina Department of Transportation

In North Carolina, county governments do not typically build or maintain roads. Aside from those that are private, virtually all other roads are built and maintained by NC DOT. Chatham lies within NC DOT's Division Eight, which is headquartered in Aberdeen, NC. Each highway division office is responsible for planning, design, construction, and maintenance of all state roads within its region. This includes the roadway surface, signage, signals, and maintenance of the surrounding right-of-ways. Each highway division works with the municipalities, MPOs and RPO within its region to plan and prioritize road projects on state highways.

E. Funding for Transportation

There are many funding opportunities for transportation in Chatham County. Some of these funding sources are allocated to the county on an annual basis while others are competitive. Some apply only to certain modes of transportation and some to specific geographic areas of the county. A single project may draw from more than one funding source, depending on the scope and complexity of the project.

The funding sources listed below are the most applicable resources for the county. For a complete list with descriptions of these and additional funding sources, see Appendix 6.

- **Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ)** is a competitive program that funds transportation projects and programs in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas to help achieve and maintain national standards for air quality pollutants. The federal program currently has a minimum project cost of \$100,000 and will fund up to 80% of the project cost. Projects must be located in Baldwin, Center, New Hope or Williams Townships. Applications are submitted to NCDOT through either the DCHC MPO or TARPO.

- The **Secondary Road Improvement Program** funds the improvement and maintenance of secondary roads, selected and prioritized in accordance with statewide criteria developed by NCDOT. Funds are allocated to each County annually from the Highway Fund and from the Highway Trust Fund.
- The **5310 Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program, 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program** and **5317 New Freedom Program** are discretionary grants the fund public transit operating and capital projects that target the elderly, persons with disabilities, low-income populations and employment-related transportation. See Appendix x for a full description of these programs.

F. Environment Pollutants

The quality of Chatham’s natural environment is impacted, in part, by its transportation system. The effects of transportation on the environment are reflected in 2007 green house gas emissions data collected from NC DOT. Chatham County experienced 1.9 billion vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 2007. The associated energy consumption was 15 million MMBtu and greenhouse gas emissions were 1.2 million U.S. tons of carbon dioxide. These vehicle-related emissions represent 59% of Chatham County’s green house gases. Chatham County’s estimated per capita transportation emissions are 19.5. In comparison, Durham County and Orange County have per capita transportation emissions of 19.2 and 16.1, respectively. (Source for conversion of MMBTu to greenhouse gas emissions: ICLEI International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives)

G. State Policy

21st Century Transportation Committee

In 2007, the NC General Assembly established the 21st Century Transportation Committee, whose purpose was to carefully study the state’s challenges, opportunities, and recommend future steps to continue and improve mobility in North Carolina.

The Committee’s 2009 report found that our state will continue to grow by 45% by 2030, a rate much faster than the nation. While only one other state operates more road mileage, North Carolina ranks 49th in revenue and 47th in spending per lane mile. In addition, the state spends approximately 5% of its annual transportation budget on freight and passenger rail, ferries, mass rapid transit, busses, bicycling, pedestrian and other non-highway transportation options. In recent years, greater fuel efficiency and higher gas prices have resulted in significant declines in gas tax revenues. This new reality forces the state to deliver projects to improve mobility while lowering costs.

The Committee’s report provided a menu of transportation funding mechanisms. Additional policy priorities include improving mobility and connectivity; preservation of the existing system (“Fix It First”),

safety; performance and accountability; and coordination with local governments. Other considerations included: incentives for a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, reduced dependence on petroleum based motor fuel, improved land use planning, and enhanced mobility through the inclusion of pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements in all transportation projects as appropriate.

Other recommendations were can be found in Appendix 7, but the formation of two pieces of legislation, the “Mobility Fund” and “Sustainable Communities Task Force” may have significant funding and financial policy impacts on regional projects.

Mobility Fund

In 2010, Governor Purdue proposed, and the General Assembly approved the Mobility Fund. The purpose of the Fund was to “provide transportation projects of statewide and regional significance that relieve congestion and enhance mobility across all modes of transportation.” The Department of Transportation shall use the Mobility Fund to fund transportation projects, selected by the Department, of statewide and regional significance that relieve congestion and enhance mobility across all modes of transportation. The funding comes from unused gap funds and reductions in the amount of money transferred from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund.

The importance of this Fund and the criteria for funding is that it falls outside of the established equity formula established since the 1989 Highway Trust Fund. It allows for joint transportation projects to stand on their own merit based on high growth areas and preferential consideration as given to Congestion Relief and Intermodal Transportation 21st Century Fund eligible projects.

Sustainable Communities Task Force

In 2010, NC General Assembly established the Sustainable Communities Task Force, to help guide state leaders consider sustainable development and “strategic use of resources to plan and accommodate healthy and equitable development without compromising natural systems and the needs of future generations of North Carolinians.”

This legislation is important because it requires state level departments and divisions to work together with regional and local planning boards to provide comprehensive transportation plans based on projected growth, sustainable land use and multiple State funding streams. Through the Task Force, state lawmakers seek to encourage better transportation choices, increase transit-oriented and mixed-use development, and preserving and enhancing the unique characteristics of rural, urban, and suburban communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods.

Complete Streets Policy

The NC Board of Transportation and NC DOT have recently recognized the importance of developing a balanced road network and transportation system. In 2009, the Board passed one of the nation's first statewide "Complete Streets" policies. A complete street is specifically defined as one that safely accommodates all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, people with disabilities, older adults, and children, in addition to automobiles and trucks. Complete Streets policies and guidelines are quickly gaining momentum among states, MPOs, counties, and municipalities as they design roadways that serve citizens who drive and those who do not.

The policy requires planners and designers to consider and incorporate multimodal alternatives in the design and improvement of all transportation projects within a growth area of a municipality unless certain circumstances exist. "As a partner in the development and realization of their visions, the Department desires to assist localities, through the facilitation of long-range planning, to optimize connectivity, network interdependence, context sensitive options, and multimodal alternatives." (NC DOT July 2009 Board of Transportation Complete Streets Policy, www.bytrain.org/fra/general/ncdot_streets_policy.pdf). NC DOT has established an advisory group to further refine the policy for implementation and develop improved roadway design guidelines.

Safe Routes to School Program

As a result of the most recent federal transportation reauthorization (SAFETEA-LU), the US Federal Highway Administration required all states to develop a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs to improve the safety and conditions for walking and bicycling for children on their way to/from school. In recent years, NC DOT developed and administered a SRTS grant program for planning, infrastructure, and non-infrastructure projects. Currently, up to \$100,000/project are available through the DOT division offices (up to \$100,000) in coordination with the state SRTS coordinator. Project examples include school-focused safety improvements such sidewalks, signage, signalization, bike lanes, and off-street shared paths. (<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/guidance/#toc123542195>)

H. Summary

While Chatham clearly maintains a rural character, the county is growing rapidly. The transportation system must adjust and evolve to address the needs of current and future Chatham residents. Chatham experiences high rates of automobile commuting, especially driving alone. By far, the most significant out-of-county commuting destination is Orange County, particularly UNC Chapel Hill.

Alternative modes of travel have increased in recent years, including walking and use of public transportation; carpooling appears to be stagnant. The county has few facilities for alternative transportation, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, off road paths, and transit facilities. Virtually all of those that do exist are limited to Siler City and Pittsboro (with exception of the newly constructed sidewalk

along 15-501 near Cole Park Plaza). The American Tobacco Trail in Chatham County is also a significant off road pathway connecting Durham and Wake counties, but the trail is almost exclusively a recreational facility. **Very few Chatham County youth walk or bicycle to school, which should be considered as part of the transportation system.**

Chatham has opportunities to influence transportation decisions that would otherwise be made solely by NC DOT. This is done through regular leadership of and participation in TARPO and the MPO. NC DOT relies on local input for long range transportation planning and implementation through its Transportation Improvement Program. In addition to these processes, Chatham County has successfully accessed grants to help serve the public transportation needs of workers, low income residents, older adults, and community college students.

Chatham Transit Network fills a critical need as a paratransit system (complemented by local private transportation services) yet it is still considered by many as a service *for* low income residents rather than one that is more widely utilized. The addition of the Chapel Hill Transit PX route reflected growth of the county's transportation system, establishing a reliable fixed route service for the Chatham's primary commuting corridor. Despite the need for this service and growth in popularity, county support for the PX route will expire in June 2011.

The NC General Assembly, NC DOT, and Board of Transportation have set the tone for greater mobility of all residents, although implementation and funding challenges remain.



Chapter 3: Values, Goals and Strategies

Values – The Chatham County Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) values a transportation system that supports:

- Social/Equity, i.e. inclusiveness of low income, older adults, children, non-drivers
 - Health, i.e. preventing asthma and other respiratory conditions, physical activity, and safety
 - Economics, i.e. job commute access, creating a livable community for employers/employees, and a destination for visitors
 - Education, i.e. access to educational opportunities
 - Environment, i.e. air and water quality
 - Connectivity, i.e. ease of access to destinations
 - Balance of Travel Modes, i.e. multi-modal: accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, disabled, transit users, motor vehicles, commercial vehicles.
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Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: The Chatham TAB is a viable means for public participation in transportation decisions.

Public Participation Strategies

1. Conduct regular meetings open to the public.
2. Serve as a venue for residents to interact with NC DOT, MPO, and TARPO representatives.
3. Solicit and consider public input through other venues.

Goal 2: The Chatham TAB provides guidance/recommendations to BOC and county staff on policies and plans related to transportation.

Policy Strategies

1. Participate in long range transportation planning processes.
2. As requested, review/comment on transportation-related policy changes before the BOC.
3. As requested, review/comment on transportation-related policies/plans from MPO, TARPO, Pittsboro, and Siler City.
4. Conduct review and recommend improvements of related Chatham County plans, proposals, ordinances, guidelines and regulations.

Goal 3: The Chatham TAB provides meaningful guidance/recommendations to BOC and county staff in prioritizing transportation projects that impact Chatham residents.

Project Strategies

1. Participate in NC DOT Transportation Improvement Plan prioritization process.

2. Identify other potential funding sources for transportation projects.

Goal 4: The Chatham TAB collaborates with existing agencies to provide convenient and accessible transportation services.

Transportation Services Strategies

1. Evaluate existing services and collaborate with Chatham Transit Network and other providers to improve transportation services.
2. Assist in planning for a transition from the Chapel Hill PX route to other service(s).

Goal 5: The Chatham TAB measure and assess status and quality of transportation system.

Quality Strategies

1. Revise TAB Strategic plan: current conditions and emerging issues, i.e. annually.
2. Identify best practices for monitoring transportation outcomes and collaborate with county staff and the BOC to track key indicators.

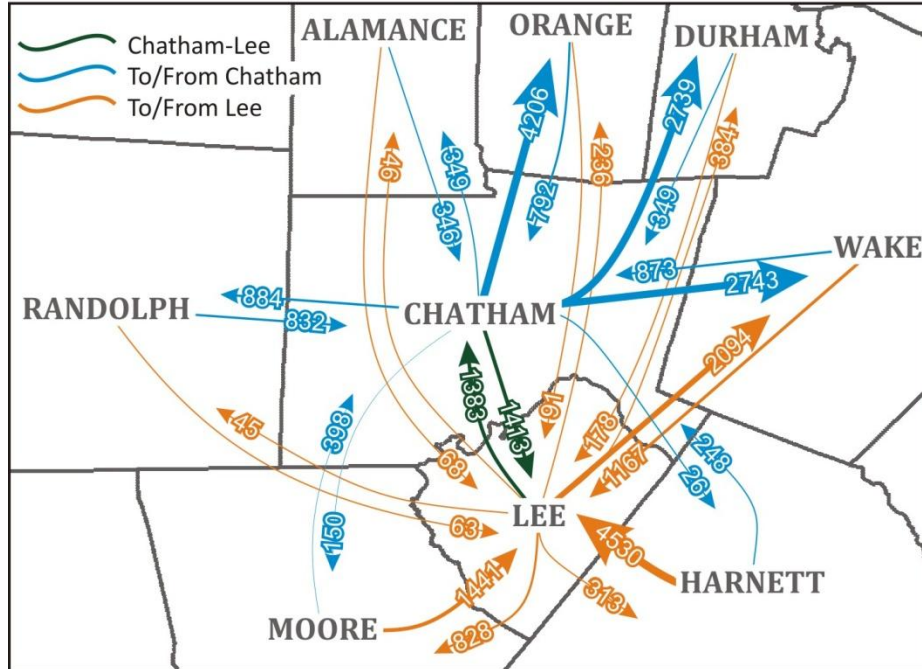
Goal 6: The Chatham TAB provides credible education and information sharing on transportation issues relevant to Chatham County.

Information Sharing Strategies

1. Establish a communication mechanism that encourages county agencies and organizations to contribute to and utilize TAB as a resource.
2. Provide information to the public on issues related to transportation.

Appendix 1

Journey-to-Work Flows, County-to-County, 2000



Appendix 2

Existing Roads and Highways in Chatham

	from County GIS data*				Source Data*
	Arterials	Collectors	Local	Total	
NCDOT	106.3	217.0	712.5	1035.8	1083.2
Siler City	0.0	0.0	34.7	34.7	33.7
Pittsboro	0.0	0.0	24.7	24.7	25.2
Goldston	0.0	0.0	3.7	3.7	3.8
Cary	0.0	0.0	11.3	11.3	unknown
Private	0.0	0.0	492.1	492.1	unknown
Total	106.3	217.0	1279.0	1602.2	

*Totals may differ between County GIS data and data gathered from each entity. This is due to inaccuracies in the County GIS data. County GIS data was used in order to break down mileage by functional classification, which was not available in the source data.

Appendix 3

Major Chatham Roads/Highways by Functional Classification

Classification	Chatham Roads (+ Ave. Daily Traffic)
Primary/Major Arterial Owned, maintained by NC DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US 64 (16,000) • US 15-501 North (19,000) • US 421 (11,000) • US 1 (18,000) • Old US 421 North (1,800)
Minor Arterial Owned, maintained by NC DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US 15-501/NC 87 South (6,900) • NC 87 North (2,600)
Major Collector Owned, maintained by NC DOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC 751 (7,700) • Farrington/Beaver Creek/Pea Ridge Rds. (4,300) • NC 902 (1,400) • Siler City-Glendon Rd. (1,200) • NC 42 (1,300) • NC 42/NC22 (1,400) • Moncure-Pittsboro Rd. (3,600) • Old US 1 (1,800) • Corinth Rd. (2,900)
Minor Collectors Owned, maintained by NC DOT	
Local Roads Owned, maintained by Siler City and Pittsboro	

Note: Minor collector and local roads are too numerous to list in this document

Appendix 4


Transit Options in Chatham County, February 2010

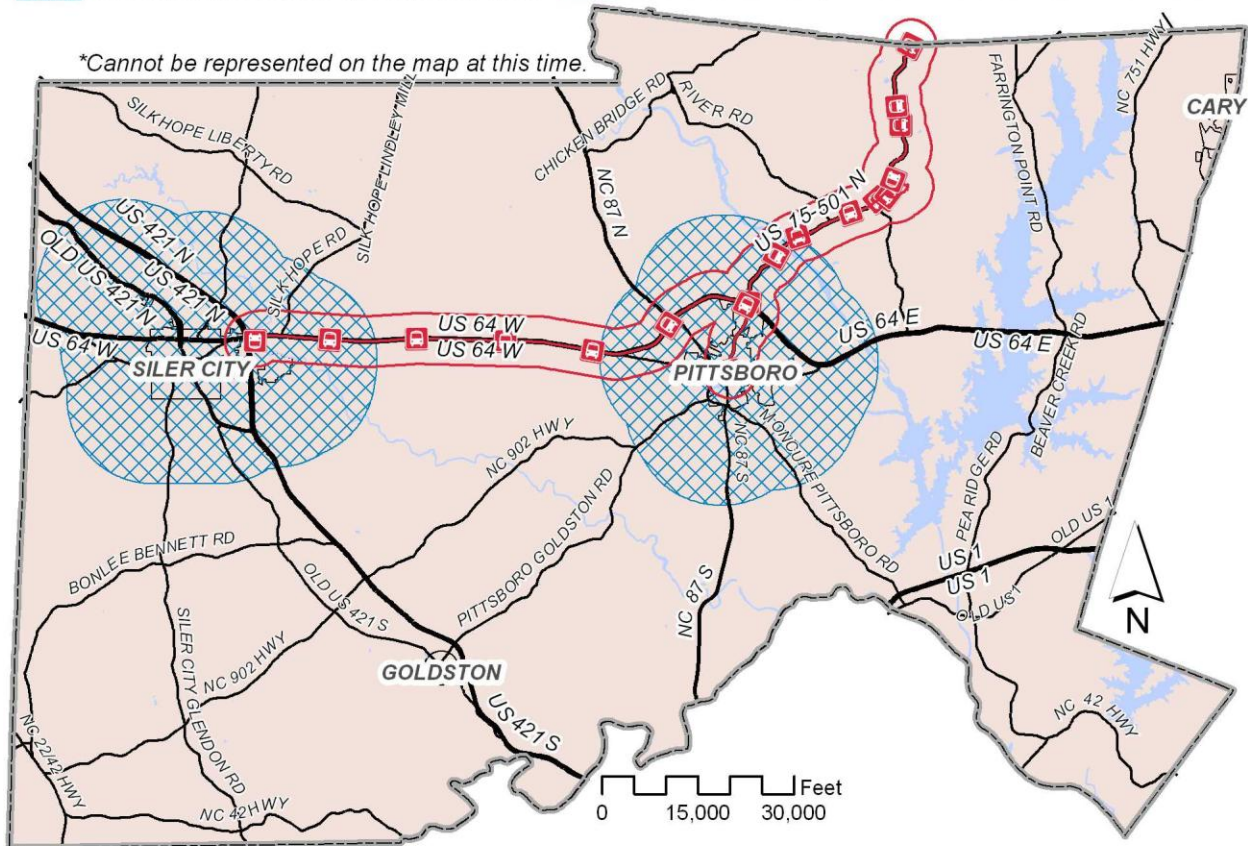
The table at right and map below show the transit options available to Chatham County residents, categorized based on the type of trip an individual wants to make and a few of the targeted populations. The text on the following page describes the four transit options that are available: a) fixed route; b) demand response, general public; c) demand/response, non-emergency medical; and, d) demand/response, human service or private.

Populations	Types of Trips		
	General Purpose	Non-Emergency Medical	Employment or Education
General Public	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d
Elderly	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d
Disabled	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d
Other Human Service	a b c d	a b c d	a b c d

Bold color/letter means that transit option is available for that population and trip type.

Transit Options in Chatham County

-  a. Fixed Route, w/ 3/4 mile ADA buffer
-  b. Demand/Response, General Public
-  c. Demand/Response, Non-Emergency Medical
-  d. Demand/Response, Human Service or Private*



a. Fixed Route

- CTN Cross County route: Travels from Siler City, to Pittsboro, to UNC-CH and back, three times a day on weekdays, making 8 stops in each direction, including a park-and-ride at the Wal-mart in Siler City and Lowe’s Home Improvement in Pittsboro. (ADA paratransit service is available within ¼ mile of this route.)
- CHT PX route: Travels from UNC-CH to Pittsboro and back, six times a day on weekdays, making about 6 stops in each direction, including a park-and-ride at the Lowe’s Home Improvement in Pittsboro. (ADA paratransit service is available within ¼ mile of this route.)

b. Demand/Response, General Public

- CTN Pittsboro area: Provides paratransit service for the general public within the Town and up to 2.5 miles outside the town limits.
- CTN Siler City area: Provides paratransit service for the general public within the Town and up to 2.5 miles outside the town limits. (This service is scheduled to convert to a fixed route in April 2010.)

c. Demand/Response, Non-Emergency Medical

- Project Health Rides: This program, begun November 2009, is available to County residents age 60 and older, and also age 18 and older with a disability or health condition that prevents them from driving, including all physical, mental and emotional disabilities that prohibits someone from providing their own transportation. It is a voucher program where human service agencies, such as the Council on Aging, provide a voucher requesting CTN services on behalf of the customer.

d. Demand/Response, Human Service or Private

- Human service agencies: A number of human service agencies provide transportation services for their clients. CTN provides these services on a subscription basis for Central Carolina Community College, Chatham County Department of Social Services, Chatham County Health Department, Chatham County Partnership for Children, Chatham County Together, Chatham Trades, Family Resource Center, Laurels of Chatham, Lee County Industries, and Siler City Care and Rehabilitation.
- Private entities: There are a few private entities offering transportation services in Chatham County, such as Sister to Sister in Siler City and Thompson & Little Transportation in Bear Creek.

Appendix 5

Inventory of Transportation and Related Plans affecting Chatham County

Report Name	Initiative (if applicable)	Sponsoring Organization(s)	Date	Modes Addressed				
				Ped	Bike	Transit	Cars	Freight
Regional Transit Vision Plan	Regional Transit Blueprint, Special Transit Advisory Commission	CAMPO, DCHC MPO	May 2008	●		●		
Regional Transit Infrastructure Blueprint Technical Analysis	Regional Transit Blueprint	TTA, CAMPO, DCHC MPO, NCDOT, TJCOG	Feb. 2007			●		
Land Use and Community Infrastructure Development	Regional Transit Blueprint	TTA, TJCOG	In progress, 2009	●	●	●		
2035 Long Range Transportation Plan		CAMPO, DCHC MPO		●	●	●	●	●
Triangle Region Transit Consolidation/ Implementation Plan		TJCOG	Aug. 2003			●		
Triangle Regional Transportation Development Plan		NCDOT	2006			●		
Land Conservation and Development Plan		Chatham County		●	●	●	●	
Strategic Plan		Chatham County	Dec. 1999	○	○	○	○	○
Statewide Transportation Plan		NCDOT	Sept. 2004	●	●	●	●	●
Pittsboro Pedestrian Transportation Plan		Pittsboro, NCDOT		●				
Parks and Recreation Master Plan		Chatham County	2009 (not adopted)	●	●			
Thoroughfare Plan(s)		Chatham County, NCDOT	1983, 1996 (not				●	

		adopted)
Strategic Highway Corridors	NCDOT	
State Transportation Improvement Program	NCDOT	
Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program	DCHC MPO	
US 64 Corridor Study	NCDOT	
Triangle Region 7-year Long Range Travel Demand Management Plan	TJCOG, TTA, CAMPO, DCHC MPO	June 2007

- Mode was primary focus of study
- ⊙ Mode was ancillary component of study
- Mode was not mentioned, but can be construed

Appendix 6

Multimodal

Surface Transportation Program-Direct Attributable (STP-DA) funds are the most flexible of DCHC funds and can be used for a variety of transportation projects, transit projects, and planning activities. The MPO funds are distributed through a partially competitive and non-competitive process.

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) is a federal program, administered by NCDOT, that funds transportation projects and programs in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas to help achieve and maintain national standards for air quality pollutants. The program has a minimum project cost of \$100,000 and will fund up to 80% of the project cost. This program is only applicable to projects that are located in Baldwin, Center, New Hope or Williams Townships in the county.

www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/tpb/services/air.html

Statewide Contingency Funds is a state program that funds highway improvements and related transportation enhancements to public roads/public facilities, industrial access roads and spot safety

projects in rural or small urban areas. Projects may be requested by municipalities, counties, businesses, schools, citizens, legislative members or NCDOT staff, and must be sponsored by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the Secretary of Transportation.

Small Construction Funds is a state program that provides up to 100% of the construction costs of transportation projects, up to \$250,000 in cost, which could not be funded in the State Transportation Improvement Program. The State appropriates \$1.5 million annually to each Highway Division. Projects can be submitted by municipalities, counties, businesses, schools, industrial entities or NCDOT staff, and are recommended to the Board of Transportation by a Project Review Committee.

Economic Development Funds is a state program that funds projects, up to \$400,000 in cost (unless waived by the Board and NCDOT Secretary), that contribute to further economic growth and development by attracting new businesses, new industries, or expanding existing businesses or industries that increase employment opportunity. For the past three fiscal years, the State has appropriated \$5M annually to each Highway Division. Funds not spent on economic development projects in each division shall be used on spot safety needs to enhance safety, reduce congestion, improve traffic flow, reduce accidents or for system preservation.

The **High Hazard Elimination** program is a federally funded safety program which requires that a systematic approach be used to add eligible safety projects to the TIP. All projects considered for this program must go through a rigorous and definitive procedure approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for ranking such projects for funding.

www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/tepl/Topics/F-26/F-26.html

The North Carolina **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** is a federally funded program that identifies, reviews and addresses specific traffic safety concerns throughout the state in order to reduce the number of traffic crashes, injuries and fatalities by reducing the potential for and the severity of these incidents on public roadways. www.ncdot.org/doh/preconstruct/traffic/safety/programs

The **Spot Safety Program**, a state funded program that is part of the HSIP, provides funding for smaller improvement projects to address safety, potential safety and operational issues. The maximum allowable contribution of Spot Safety funds per project is \$250,000, with other monetary sources (such as Small Construction or Contingency funds) often assisting in funding these projects.

The **Hazard Elimination Program**, part of the HSIP, is used to develop larger improvement projects to address safety and potential safety issues. It is funded with 90% federal funds and 10% state funds, with projects typically ranging in cost between \$400,000 and \$1 million.

Roads

The **State Street-Aid (Powell Bill) Program** allocates funds to incorporated municipalities on an annual basis for the purposes of maintaining, repairing, constructing, reconstructing or widening local streets that are the responsibility of the municipalities or for planning, constructing or maintaining bikeways or sidewalks along public streets and highways. www.ncdot.org/programs/Powell_Bill

Public Access Funds is a state program that funds public school bus drives, access roads to public airports and medical facilities, driveways for rural fire district and rescue squad facilities, and projects to assist in attracting new industry and/or relocating or expanding industry. Projects can be requested by schools, volunteer fire departments and industrial entities. Project limits are \$50,000 per public school site, \$25,000 per fire/rescue driveway project, and \$1,000 per employee for industrial access projects.

The **Secondary Road Improvement Program** is a state program that funds the improvement and maintenance of secondary roads, selected and prioritized in accordance with statewide criteria developed by NCDOT. Funds are allocated to each County annually from the Highway Fund and from the Highway Trust Fund. (G.S. 136-44.2A, G.S. 136-44.7 and G.S. 136-44.8)

The **High Risk Rural Roads Program (HRRRP)**, part of the HSIP, provides funding for construction and operational improvements on rural collectors or local roads. High risk rural roads are defined as those roadways that are functionally classified as rural major collectors, rural minor collectors, or rural local roads with a fatal and incapacitating injury crash rate above the statewide average for those functional classes of roadway, or likely to experience an increase in traffic volume that leads to a fatal and incapacitating injury crash rate in excess of the average statewide rate.

The Office of **Federal Lands Highway (FLH)** provides program stewardship and transportation engineering services for planning, design, construction, and rehabilitation of the highways and bridges that provide access to and through federally owned lands (including Army Corps of Engineers lakes). flh.fhwa.dot.gov

The **Highway Bridge Program (HBP)**... <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/bridge/hbrpp.htm>

The **Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP)** provides "seed" funding for highway safety projects or programs. All projects are expected to make substantial progress in reducing crashes, injuries and fatalities as a condition of continued funding. Additionally, funding cannot be used to replace or supplant existing expenditures, nor can they be used to carry out the general operating expenses of the grantee. www.ncdot.gov/programs/GHSP

Transit

NCDOT PTD's **Community Transportation Program** is a combination of three federal and state programs that provides the majority of funding for the state's rural transportation systems. First, the *Non-urbanized Area Formula Program* (FTA Section 5311) is a Federal program that funds capital, operating and administrative activities. The maximum federal participation is 80% for administrative and capital costs and 50% for operating, with NCDOT matching 5% for administrative costs and 10% for capital. Second, the *Rural Capital Program* is a combination of three federal and state programs that provides up to 90% of the funds for the purchase of vehicles, communications equipment and related capital equipment; the purchase or upgrade of computer equipment, file servers, software, printers, telephone systems, mobile data terminals, automatic vehicle locators and other technologies; the purchase or renovation of facilities for administrative and/or operating use; or, the preparation of feasibility plans, land acquisitions, and design and construction costs. Lastly, the *Human Service Transportation*

Management Program provides up to 85% of eligible costs for the administrative costs associated with the transportation of consolidated human service transportation systems and systems operating in urbanized area counties where a consolidated countywide transit system does not exist.

The **Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)** is a combination of three state programs and is directed to county governments. First, the *Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP)* provides up to 100% of the cost of operating assistance for transportation for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Second, the *Rural General Public Program* provides up to 90% of the cost for general public service in rural areas. Finally, the *Employment Transportation Assistance Program* funds up to 100% of the cost for transportation to employment for low-income individuals and also supports the North Carolina Rural Vanpool Program.

The **5310 Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program** is for expanding trip opportunities for older individuals and persons with disabilities.

The **5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program** targets persons of low income and welfare recipients as a primary user, as well as anyone whose commute trips “are not effectively served by public transportation.” The program is further broadened by the inclusion of trips related to training or job retention that benefit persons of low income and welfare recipients, including trips to daycare, certification courses or employment services.

The **5317 New Freedom Program** is “going beyond ADA requirements” to make public transportation more accessible to persons with disabilities. This generally includes two types of projects: 1) physical facilities, such as improved pathways, audible information at bus stops or accommodation of oversized wheelchairs; and, 2) expanded service, such as service beyond the required quarter mile ADA service buffer either side of fixed routes, new ADA feeder services or new volunteer driver programs.

	5310	5316	5317
Eligible Activities	Capital, including mobility management activities and voucher programs Operating	Capital, including mobility management activities Operating	Capital, including mobility management activities Operating
Cost Split	<i>Federal/State/Local</i> 80/10/10* for Capital 50/0/50* for Operating	<i>Federal/State/Local</i> 80/10/10 for Capital 50/0/50 for Operating	<i>Federal/State/Local</i> 80/10/10 for Capital 50/0/50 for Operating
Requires Locally Coordinated Plan?	YES	YES	YES
Private Sector May Compete?	NO	YES	YES

**A transit system can use its ROAP funds towards the required local match for 5310.*

The most recent call for projects from NCDOT PTD for these funds was in early 2010, with an application due date of March 31, 2010. The table at right shows the amount of funds available in rural and small urban areas in each category, as well as what was awarded to project applicants.

	5310	5316	5317
Available	\$3,573,511	\$5,025,237	\$3,266,800
Awarded	\$1,873,035	\$1,660,692	\$388,850

The North Carolina **Congestion Relief and Intermodal 21st Century Transportation Fund** (House Bill 148, signed into law August 2009) gives local governments the authority to levy a ¼ cent sales tax and/or car registration fee to fund public transportation.

FTA Discretionary – 5309

The **Regional and Intercity Program** provides up to 50% of net operating costs for intercity bus service in underserved areas of North Carolina that connect to the national intercity network, and provides state funds for Travelers’ Aid programs that assist homeless, stranded or indigent travelers with their intercity transportation needs through the purchase of bus tickets.

The **Rural Planning Program** is a federal and state program that funds up to 100% of the cost of regional feasibility studies and up to 90% for implementation plans or local planning studies.

The **Public Transportation Grant Program** is a state program with several purposes: provide matching funds for NCDOT statewide grants and local federal capital and planning grants; fund short-term demonstration projects and those ineligible for federal funding; and, fund the Apprentice and Intern Programs and the Transportation Demand Management Program. The *Apprentice and Intern Programs* provide up to 90% of the eligible costs for the work experience of selected recent graduates (apprentices) and graduate students (interns) in public transportation. The *Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program* is a combination of federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds and state funds to encourage ridesharing arrangements such as carpools and vanpools and the use of public transit and other alternative transportation in an effort to reduce congestion and vehicle emissions.

Bicycle, Pedestrian and Others

The **Transportation Enhancement** program is a federal program, administered by NCDOT’s Program Development Branch, for surface transportation and related projects that benefit the traveling public and help communities increase transportation choices and access, enhance the built or natural environment and create a sense of place. The program has twelve qualifying activities and funds up to 80% of the project cost. www.ncdot.org/programs/Enhancement

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a federal program, managed by NCDOT, which seeks to improve safety and encourage more children to safely walk and bicycle to school. safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes

The **Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative** is an annual matching grant program administered by the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the Transportation Planning Branch to encourage municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. Only

municipalities are eligible for the program, which provides 60-80% of the project cost, based on municipal population. www.ncdot.org/bikeped/planning

The **National Scenic Byways Program** provides funding for activities associated with established Scenic Byways, including State and Indian Tribe Scenic Byway Programs, Corridor Management Plans, safety improvements, byway facilities, access to recreation, resource protection, interpretive information and marketing. www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/byways

The **Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program** is a comprehensive initiative of research and grants to investigate the relationships between transportation, community and system preservation plans and practices and identify private sector-based initiatives to improve such relationships. States, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, and tribal governments are eligible for discretionary grants to carry out eligible projects to integrate transportation, community and system preservation plans and practices that improve the efficiency of the transportation system of the United States; reduce environmental impacts of transportation; reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments; ensure efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade; and, examine community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns and investments that support these goals. www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp

The **North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation** manages three grant programs (www.ncparks.gov/About/grants/trails_main.php). The **Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) Grant Program** funds projects related to the promotion, construction or renovation of trails or trail-side facilities, providing up to 100% of projects costs with a maximum project cost of \$5,000. The **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** funds projects related to the construction or renovation of trails or trail-side facilities, providing up to 75% of project costs with a maximum project cost of \$75,000. The **Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)** provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for parks and recreational projects to serve the public, with a maximum project cost of \$500,000.

Appendix 7

21st Century Transportation Committee

The 21st Century Transportation Committee was established by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives pursuant to G.S. 120-19.6(a1), Rule 31 of the Rules of the Senate of the 2007 General Assembly, and Rule 26(a) of the Rules of the House of Representatives of the 2007 General Assembly. The 21st Century Transportation Committee held thirteen meetings from November 2007 to December 2008.

In accordance with the charge, the committee studied the following:

- (1) Ways to improve the transportation systems of the State in order to promote economic growth and ensure that the State can compete and participate in the global economy.
- (2) Innovative methods to fund the transportation needs of the State, including an examination of traditional and nontraditional methods of financing transportation infrastructure.
- (3) Priorities of the Department of Transportation, including methods to ensure adequate funding for corridors and projects of statewide significance.
- (4) Methods to use new and innovative technology to improve the transportation system.
- (5) Local funding options for transportation.
- (6) Ways to adequately fund road construction to address urban congestion and to improve mobility.
- (7) Methods to spend transportation funds in the most effective and cost efficient manner, including ways to use recycled materials, and reuse and recycle road materials.
- (8) Ways to maintain the continued safety of the current transportation system, including an analysis of the safety and reliability of bridges in the State.
- (9) The appropriate division of responsibility for transportation infrastructure between State and local government and any federal role in providing transportation infrastructure needs.
- (10) An examination of the role of ports, airports, mass transit, rail, and pedestrian and cycling access in providing the transportation needs of the State.
- (11) A review of public transportation needs in urban areas.
- (12) Methods to encourage fuel conservation and energy conservation in North Carolina.

The 21st Century Transportation Committee members traveled to several cities across the state in 2007 and 2008, including Asheville, Charlotte, Raleigh and Wilmington, to gain information on transportation issues facing North Carolina as well as potential mobility solutions.

The findings of the committee were as follows:

- Our State's population grew by 30% from 1990 to 2005. This rate of growth is faster than the U.S. growth rate of 19% and faster than all but eight other states. This robust growth is expected to continue. The 2005 estimated population was 8,679,291 while the projected population for 2030 is 12,465,478 – this is a rate of growth of more than 43% over the next twenty five years. By 2030, North Carolina is projected to become the 7th most populous state in the nation. This is the equivalent to adding a South Carolina to our State. This growth presents great opportunity and great challenges, particularly to our State's aging transportation infrastructure.

- North Carolina currently ranks 2nd out of 50 states in total state maintained road mileage. On the other hand, the State ranks 49th in total revenue per lane-mile, and 47th in spending per lane mile.
- According to a 2006 TRIP Report on the Interstate Highway system, 57% of all urban interstate miles in North Carolina and 47% of rural interstate miles are congested. In addition, 40% of all travel in urban areas is conducted during congested conditions. Estimates project a 50% growth in vehicle miles traveled over existing conditions by 2030.
- Currently, North Carolina spends approximately 5% of its annual transportation budget on freight and passenger rail, ferries, mass rapid transit, busses, bicycling, pedestrian and other non-highway transportation options.
- The North Carolina Department of Transportation reports that to meet current needs and to prepare North Carolina for 2030, an estimated additional investment of over \$65 billion is required to plan, design, build and maintain all aspects of our transportation systems.
- The user-pay model of taxing the consumption of fuel has worked well since 1921 and has adequately funded transportation needs in the State until recent years. As vehicles have become more fuel efficient, and gas prices have become more volatile, consumption has flattened and in recent months declined resulting in a precipitous drop in gas tax revenues. In addition, as the State works to promote the use of alternative fuels, revenues linked to the consumption of petroleum-based fuels are likely to continue to fall.
- Toll roads are a user-pay model used in high-growth areas around the country.
- North Carolina is a federal transportation “donor” state. The State continues to send more in transportation funds to Washington than it receives in return, for both highways and transit.
- NCDOT reports that highway construction costs have increased 124% in the past six years.
- North Carolina currently has over 2,500 structurally deficient bridges and ranks 41st out of the 50 states in terms of bridge deficiencies. The North Carolina Department of Transportation estimates that it needs to replace 400 bridges annually in order to reduce the number of structurally deficient bridges. Currently, the Department replaces only slightly more than 100 bridges annually.
- As documented in the NCDOT Long Range Transportation Plan, currently 37 percent of State transportation expenditures are on the statewide tier of facilities, 19 percent on the regional tier, and 44 percent on the sub-regional tier. However, the statewide tier accounts for 49 percent of the needs while carrying 50 percent of all traffic, the regional tier is 12 percent of the needs and 15 percent of the traffic, and sub-regional tier is 39 percent of the need and 35 percent of the traffic.

- North Carolina must simultaneously reduce the time and costs involved in delivering transportation projects. Currently, large projects take between 8 and 10 years for planning and permitting with increasing portions of transportation budgets being spent on these activities. North Carolina must do better at balancing these planning requirements with the fiscal stewardship our citizens deserve, as other states have done.

Many recommendations were made based on these findings (they can be found in the Appendixes of this Strategic Plan) but the formation of two pieces of legislation, the “Mobility Fund” and “Sustainable Communities Task Force” may have significant funding and financial policy impacts on regional projects.

Mobility Fund

The Department of Transportation shall use the Mobility Fund to fund transportation projects of statewide and regional significance that relieve congestion and enhance mobility across all modes of transportation. The Department of Transportation shall establish project selection criteria based on the provisions of this article.

The initial project funded from the Mobility Fund shall be the widening and improvement of Interstate 85 north of the Yadkin River Bridge.

The Department of Transportation shall develop, and update annually, a report containing a completion schedule for all projects to be funded from the Mobility Fund, including the selection criteria and reasoning used for each project. The annual update shall indicate the projects, or portions thereof, that were completed during the preceding fiscal year, any changes in the original completion schedules, and the reasons for the changes. The report shall also include the Department's anticipated schedule for future projects. The Department shall submit the report and the annual updates to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee."

The Department of Transportation shall develop a selection criteria under G.S. 136-188, as enacted by this act, and shall report to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee on its development of the selection criteria. A preliminary report on the selection criteria for projects is due to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee by October 1, 2010. A final report is due to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee by December 15, 2010 (located in the Appendix).

The funds appropriated to the North Carolina Turnpike Authority in fiscal year 2009-2010 under G.S. 136-176(b2) for the Monroe Connector/Bypass, twenty-four million dollars (\$24,000,000), and the Mid-Currituck Bridge, fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000), are hereby transferred to the North Carolina Mobility Fund, as enacted by this act, to be used for Phase II of the Yadkin River Bridge project.

The importance of this Fund and the criteria for funding is it falls outside of the established equity formula established since the 1989 Highway Trust Fund and allows for joint transportation projects to stand on their own merit based on high growth areas and preferential consideration as given to Congestion Relief and Intermodal Transportation 21st Century Fund eligible projects.

Sustainable Communities Task Force

The General Assembly finds that the rapid growth of the urban and suburban areas of North Carolina and the economic challenges facing many of the State's urban cores, rural areas, and smaller communities create a significant need for the strategic use of resources to plan and accommodate healthy and equitable development without compromising natural systems and the needs of future generations of North Carolinians.

The General Assembly finds that the following principles describe sustainable development for North Carolina's communities:

- (1) Better transportation choices. – Offering safe, reliable, and economical motorized and nonmotorized transportation options to decrease household transportation costs, reduce dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- (2) Equitable, affordable housing. – Encouraging the provision to North Carolina citizens of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities expanded location-, water- and energy-efficient housing choices that increase mobility, decrease the impact on existing water and energy infrastructure, and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- (3) Enhanced economic competitiveness. – Expanding business access to markets and improving North Carolina's economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers.
- (4) Support of existing communities. – Targeting public funds toward existing communities that are using strategies such as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling to increase community revitalization, enhance the efficiency and cost effectiveness of public works investments, and protect rural landscapes.
- (5) Coordination and leverage of State policies and investment. – Aligning State and local government policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of government in planning for future growth.
- (6) Recognize and support communities and neighborhoods. – Preserving and enhancing the unique characteristics of rural, urban, and suburban communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods.

There is created within the Department of Commerce the North Carolina Sustainable Communities Task Force to lead and support the State's sustainable communities initiatives.

The duties of the Task Force shall be as follows:

- (1) To apply for and receive, on behalf of the State, funding from federal, public or private initiatives, grant programs, or donors that will foster sustainable development in North Carolina.
- (2) To promote regional partnerships and to assist local governments and regional or interlocal organizations in North Carolina in seeking and managing funding from federal, public or private initiatives, grant programs, or donors related to the planning, development, or redevelopment of the State's communities in a sustainable manner.
- (3) To identify federal funding opportunities related to sustainable development.
- (4) To provide technical assistance to eligible State agencies, local governments, nonprofits or regional collaborations and partnerships in applying for federal and other funding opportunities. This technical assistance shall include the development of scenario planning tools, progress measurement metrics, and public participation strategies for use by all applicants.
- (5) To recommend policies for the support, promotion, and encouragement of sustainable communities to the Secretaries of the Departments of Commerce, Environment and Natural Resources, and Transportation, the General Assembly, and the Governor.
- (6) To recommend annually to the Governor appropriations for sustainable development programs.
- (7) To develop a common local government sustainable practices scoring system incorporating the principles set forth in G.S. 143B-472.130(b).
- (8) To pursue opportunities to combine the efforts of State agencies related to development and infrastructure; to study how existing regional and interlocal organizations could improve their organization and reduce unnecessary overlap and duplication of services; and to better integrate State efforts and investments with regional and local efforts. The Task Force shall include in its recommendations under subdivisions (5) and (6) of this section any recommendations for legislation necessary to implement any potential improvements identified under this subdivision.

The importance of this legislation is it requires many state level departments and divisions to work together with regional and local planning boards to provide comprehensive transportation plans based on projected growth, sustainable land use and multiple State funding streams.