CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Transportation plays a critical role in people's daily routine and quality of life. It also plays a significant role in economic development and public safety. Because transportation projects often involve local, state, and often federal coordination for funding, construction standards, and to meet regulatory guidelines, projects are identified many years and sometimes decades prior to the actual construction of a new facility or improvement. Coordinating transportation projects with future growth is a necessity.

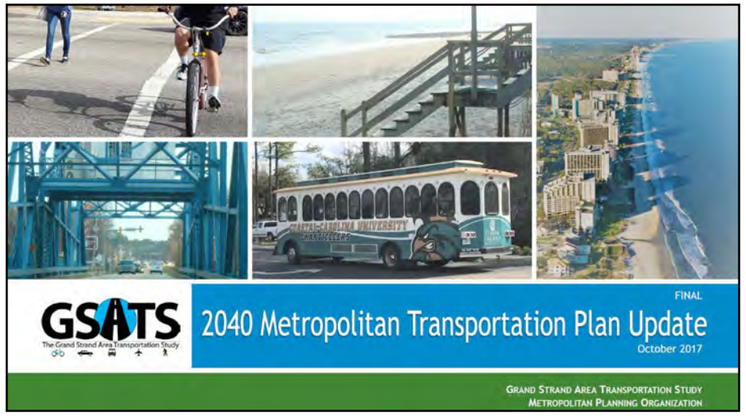
The Transportation Chapter provides an analysis of transportation systems serving Horry County including existing roads, planned or proposed major road improvements and new road construction, existing transit projects, existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

There are a number of agencies involved in transportation planning efforts, including Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS), Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG), and numerous County departments. In addition, South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and area municipalities play a critical role in identifying inter-jurisdictional project needs.

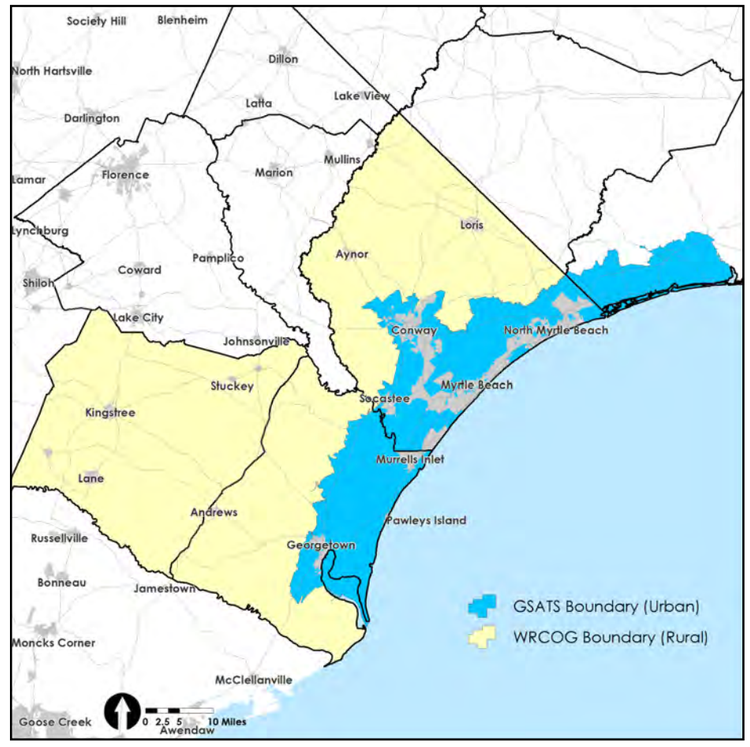
Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as designated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the urbanized region of Brunswick, Horry, and Georgetown counties. It is made up of representation from each of the three counties, municipalities, COAST RTA, SCDOT, and WRCOG. GSATS agencies analyze the short- and long-range transportation needs of the region and offer a public forum for transportation decision-making.

GSATS is responsible for an overall 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) that identifies the most desirable and efficient means of meeting transportation needs. The plan addresses a minimum of a 20-year planning horizon and includes both long- and short-range strategies and actions that lead to the development of an integrated, intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods. The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is a five-year capital projects plan adopted by the GSATS and by SCDOT. The local TIP also includes a three-year estimate of transit capital and maintenance requirements. The projects within the TIP are derived from the MTP. Information on GSATS Plans and funded projects can be found on their website at www.gsats.org



The **Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG)** not only assists in managing GSATS, but it also helps SCDOT with transportation planning outside of the boundaries of the MPO for Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg counties. SCDOT partnered with WRCOG to develop the **Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP)** to identify and prioritize state highway needs for areas outside of the MPO. The Rural Long Range Transportation Improvement Plan (Rural TIP) covers funded "Guideshare" regional improvement projects that comply with South Carolina ACT 114 and are identified in the RLRTP. The TIP is not only a plan but a fiscally constrained document. Additionally, it covers other federally funded project awards designated to a municipality or agency within rural jurisdictions. These federally funded projects are typically expected to be undertaken during a six-year period.

GSATS and WRCOG Planning Areas



Source: Horry County Planning and Zoning GIS

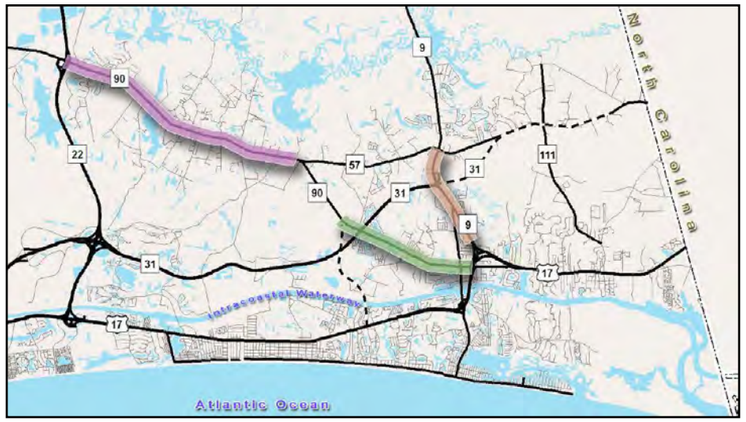
SPECIALIZED STUDIES AND PLANS

Beyond these regional planning initiatives that are mandated to receive federal and state transportation funding, GSATS and the agencies involved in it have developed a number of transportation plans and studies that are relevant to unincorporated Horry County. These plans are used to inform future corridor design and bicycle and pedestrian needs. The County utilizes these plans to ensure that development in these areas coincides with the recommendations of the plans.

The Kings Highway Corridor Study (2008) area covers the section of US Hwy 17 Kings Hwy from Farrow Parkway up to the City limits of North Myrtle Beach. In the County's jurisdiction, it addresses the area known as Restaurant Row. The plan includes recommended projects and design cross sections for the corridor.

The **Northeast Area Transportation Plan (2009)** study area was bounded by SC 22 to the west, SC 90 and SC 57 to the north, SC 9 to the east, and the Intracoastal Waterway to the south. The study area also included the Little River Neck area south of the Intracoastal and east of SC 9. The plan looked beyond the roadway to determine the effects of growth on the built environment and acknowledges the importance of balancing the land use and transportation equation. The plan provides tools aimed at creating a successful merger between smart growth and the demands of the roadway users. The plan includes a Transportation Best Practices Toolbox which provides background information and guiding principles on access management, collector street planning, complete streets, and interchange design. It also provides detailed cross sections, including median, bicycle and pedestrian, and right of way needs for portions of SC 90 and SC 9.

Focus areas in the Northeast Area Transportation Plan



Source: Northeast Area Transportation Plan

The **Comprehensive Road Improvement Plan** is also known as the dirt road paving plan. This plan was developed to address road improvement needs for the unincorporated areas of the County. It is regularly updated by Horry County Council as projects are completed or deemed infeasible. Projects are added to the plan as approved by Resolution by County Council.

The East Coast Greenway is projected to be a 2,600-mile long multi-use urban spine trail system extending from the northeast corner of Maine (Calais, Maine) to the southern tip of the Florida Keys. The **East Coast Greenway Master Plan (2003)** plan focuses on the 92 miles of trail that will make up the East Coast Greenway route through Horry County and Georgetown County. The plan is being implemented through Transportation Alternatives Funds that are prioritized and allocated for the development of the East Coast Greenway in the GSATS region. Sections of the East Coast Greenway have been completed in unincorporated Horry County, and the entire 13 miles in the City of Myrtle Beach have been completed. Efforts are underway to connect existing sections of trail throughout the County.

In addition to the East Coast Greenway planning efforts, Horry County has developed the **Horry County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**. It identifies opportunities for greater connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians, including projects associated with roadway improvements and trail systems to connect neighborhoods and destinations. To date, the plan identifies the needs in the Carolina Forest and Burgess communities; however, there is an expressed desire to expand the plan to include all of the bicycle and pedestrian needs of unincorporated Horry County.

The **Coast RTA Transit Development Plan** is a five-year plan addressing transit needs in Horry and Georgetown Counties. Written in 2010 and updated in 2014, the Plan lays out a series of service and capital improvements for the regional transit system. Recommendations include several service improvements including expansion of fixed route service to Loris, Longs, and North Myrtle Beach, introduction of a vanpool program and more tourist based service. The Plan also laid out a series of capital improvements for the system, including a bus stop sign/shelter program and replacement of the system's operating and maintenance facility.

EXISTING PLANS FINDINGS

Transportation plans and studies are currently underway in Horry County. These plans and studies range in size and design based on the area of which they are implemented to target. At this time, Horry County largely relies on GSATS and the WRCOG to develop its transportation plans. As unincorporated Horry County begins to develop and urbanize, the demand for localized planning efforts will increase. Such planning can refine and define community character and shape quality growth.

EXISTING ROAD NETWORK

Horry County has the largest road network of any county in South Carolina. It includes federal, state, local, and private roads. The capacity and condition of our existing road network is influenced by existing land use and growth.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Horry County maintains a total of 1,464 miles of county roads, of which 864 miles are paved and 600 miles are unpaved. Additionally, the South Carolina Department of Transportation manages a total of 1,338 miles of primary and secondary state roads within the County. The federal government and the state maintain a total of 223 miles of US Highways. (October 2017). The majority of roads within new subdivisions are conveyed to the County. Roads are typically classified by their design and average daily traffic count (ADT).

Road Classification		
Street Type	**Function**	**Guideline Maximum ADT**
Major Arterial	Artery conveying more than 9000 ADT.	9001+
Minor Arterial	Principal traffic artery within residential or commercial areas that carry relatively high traffic volumes and conveys traffic from arterial streets to lower-order streets. Its function is to promote the free flow of traffic; as such, no parking shall be permitted along and no residences should have direct access to such roads.	5,001 - 9000
Collector	Conducts and distributes traffic between lower-order and higher-order streets. Carries large traffic volume at high speed. Function is to promote free traffic flow; therefore, parking and direct access to homes from this level of street is prohibited.	2,001 - 5,000
Neighborhood Collector	This is a collector road that is usually within a master planned community. The road volumes are too high to provide direct access to the street.	2,001-4,000
Sub-collector	Provides frontage for access to lots, and carries traffic of adjoining access streets. Designed to carry somewhat higher traffic volumes with traffic limited to motorists having origin or destination within the immediate neighborhood.	501-2,000
Access Street	Provides frontage for access to lots, and carries traffic having destination or origin on the street itself.	500
Alley	A service road that typically provides access to lots whose primary frontage is on a collector or arterial status road. On same level as an access street, but different standards apply. Should be designed to discourage through traffic, but shall not be limited to one (1) access point.	500
Shared Private Driveway	A non-exclusive and appurtenant easement. The primary function is to provide access to three or fewer lots. Shared private driveway easements are intended for traffic speeds less than ten mile per hour.	30

When rezoning requests and new developments are being planned, Horry County evaluates the capacity of the existing roadway system and those roadways within the proposed development. New public or private roadways are designed to ensure that the roadway will function as intended and will provide safe and efficient traffic movement to the public. Geometric features, such as sight distances for stopping on horizontal and vertical curves, corner sight distances, and horizontal and vertical curves are sized and designed in accordance with the standards published in the South Carolina Department of Transportation Highway Standards Manual or the AASHTO Manual based on the roadway type that will be constructed.

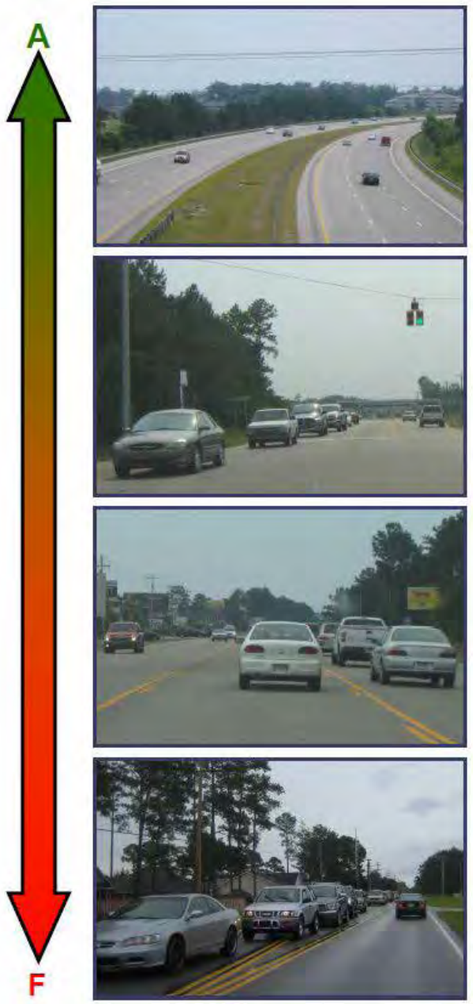
MAINTENANCE

Road maintenance responsibilities depend upon the ownership of the road. SCDOT is responsible for the maintenance of state-maintained roadways. Horry County Public Works and Engineering departments are responsible for roads within the County's maintenance system, both paved and unpaved. Paved roadways are repaired and resurfaced with road fee funds. The road fee funds also assist with the paving of approximately eight miles of unpaved roadways a year, largely in rural parts of the County. 100 miles of dirt roads were paved through RIDE-2 funding along with the resurfacing of 67 miles of existing paved roads. Ride-3 will fund the paving of an additional 100 miles of dirt roads along with the resurfacing an additional 67 miles of existing paved roads. All unimproved roadways are selected for paving through the priority ranking of the County's Comprehensive Dirt Road Paving Plan. Routine maintenance and scraping of unimproved roadways are funded by the General Fund. Private road maintenance is the responsibility of the owner or often a homeowners' association.

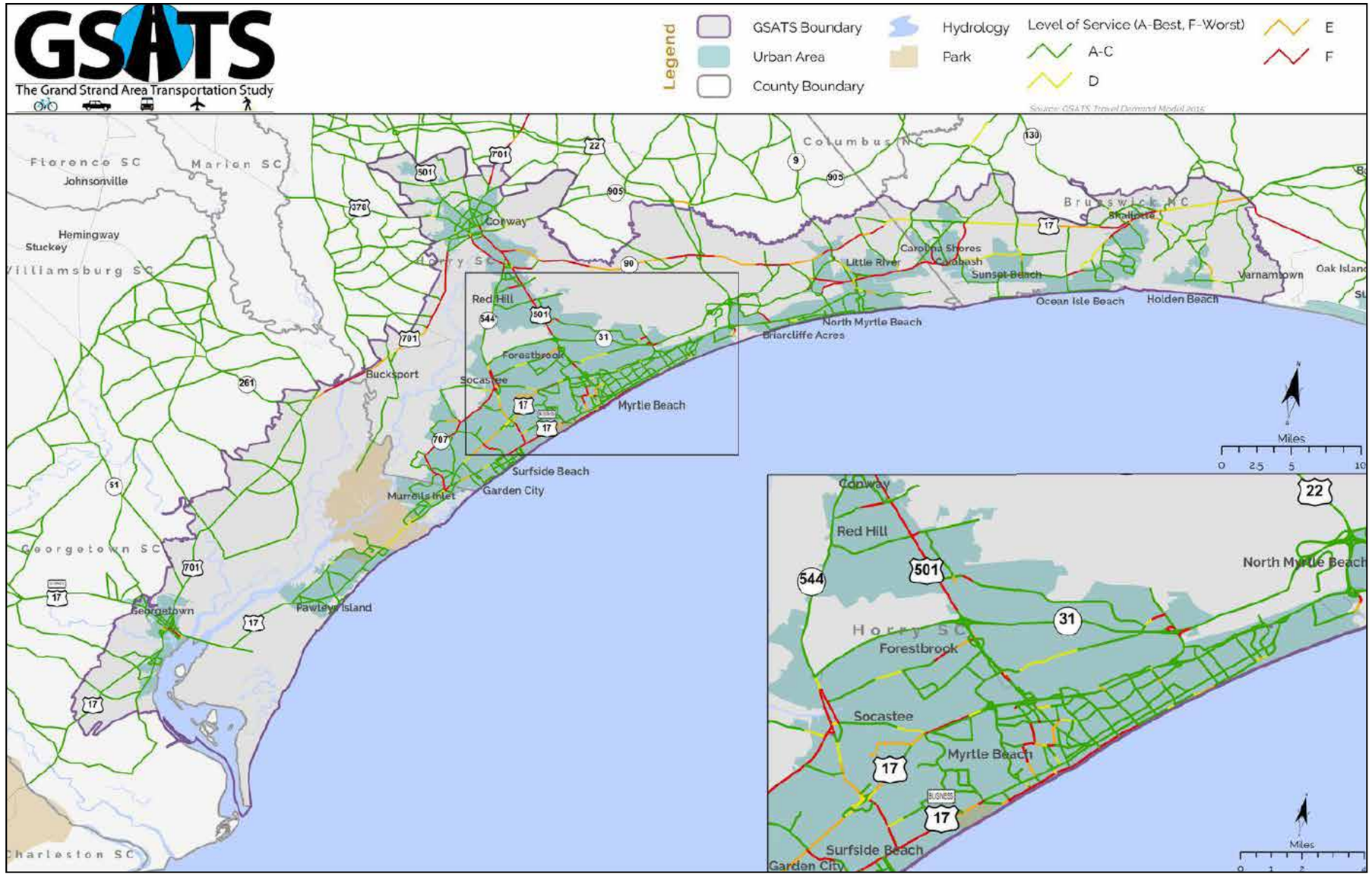
LEVEL OF SERVICE

Based on the Highway Capacity Manual by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies (TRB), Level of Service (LOS) is a scale used to evaluate how the use of a roadway compares to the number of vehicles it was designed to accommodate. Transportation planners derive LOS for a roadway by examining its traffic volumes, operating capacity (the number of vehicles per hour the roadway can handle without creating congestion), and estimated or observed vehicle speeds. When the roadway traffic volume exceeds the capacity of the roadway, the facility loses its ability to efficiently move traffic and becomes congested. LOS ratings are similar to the A-to-F grading system used in school.

While LOS evaluates traffic congestion, it is only one measure of the condition of roadways and does not provide solutions to resolving congestion. Often times, the easy assumption is that a roadway needs to be widened; when in fact, the issue may be traffic light timing or the need for turn lanes. In many cases, congestion may be relieved through improved road connectivity. Understanding driver origins and destinations is extremely important to identifying long-term solutions. The County can assess the location of major destinations, such as shopping centers, schools, and employment centers. It can also utilize available information from Bluetooth users to better understand their travel patterns, especially for vacationers traveling in from out of the region and the state. Understanding existing and future land use patterns can inform the need for new roadways and traffic improvements.



LOS	Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio
A	< 0.5
B	> 0.49 and ≤ 0.74
C	> 0.74 and ≤ 1.0
D	> 1.0 and ≤ 1.15
E	> 1.15 and ≤1.34
F	> 1.34



2015 Roadway Level of Service Scores for the GSATS Area

Sources: Northeast Area Transportation Plan, GSATS 2040 MTP

INTERSECTIONS

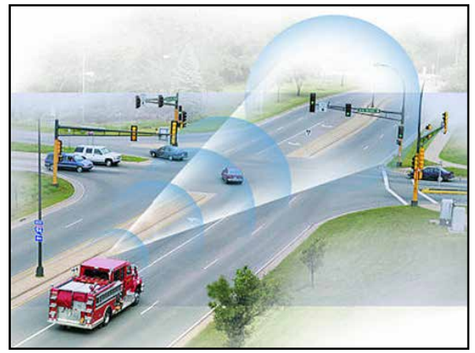
Signalization and intersection improvements can manage traffic flow in an effort to reduce crashes, mitigate environmental impacts such as fuel consumption and emissions, and reduce congestion from normal and unexpected delays. Failing intersections are a primary cause of traffic delays and poor Level of Service ratings from roadways. A progressive-controlled signal system can coordinate traffic signals along a corridor to allow vehicles to move through multiple signals without stopping. Traffic signals are spaced appropriately and synchronized so when a vehicle is released from one intersection the signal at the next intersection will be green by the time the vehicle reaches it. Likewise, adaptive signal control involves continuously collecting automated intersection traffic volumes and using the volumes to alter signal timing and phasing to best accommodate actual—real-time—traffic volumes. Adaptive signal control can increase isolated intersection capacity as well as improve overall corridor mobility by up to 20% during off-peak periods and 10% during peak periods.

2015 Intersection Level of Service Scores for a portion of GSATS Area

Source: GSATS 2040 MTP, Appendix D

Emergency Vehicle Preemption is another method to alter signalization when an oncoming emergency or other suitably equipped vehicle changing the indication of a traffic signal to green to favor the direction of desired travel. Preemption improves emergency vehicle response time, reduces vehicular lane and roadway blockages, and improves the safety of the responders by stopping conflicting movements. Such investments can mean the difference between life and death for those needing medical assistance or to put out fires.

Emergency Vehicle Preemption



Sources: US DOT Traffic Signal Timing Manual

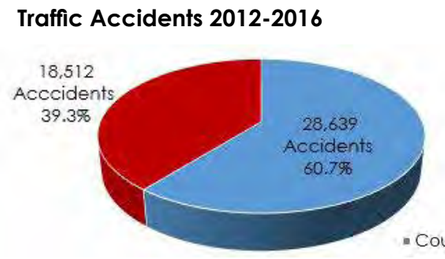
Beyond signalization improvements, other intersection improvements, such as lighting, crosswalks, and appropriately designed turn lanes, can make significant headway in reducing traffic accidents.

SAFETY

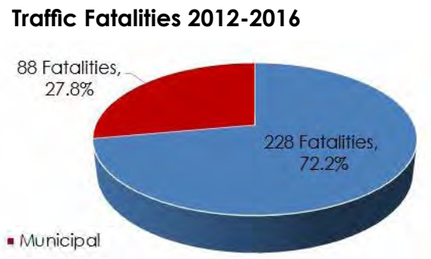
Traffic accidents serve a measure of safety and often provide an indicator of where road improvements are necessary. Unfortunately, Horry County, including its municipalities, have led the State of South Carolina in the number of traffic fatalities. 60.7% off all accidents and 72.2% of all traffic fatalities between 2012-2016 occurred in unincorporated Horry County.

Distracted driving, people not knowing where they are going, alcohol use, and not wearing seatbelts are common factors in Horry County traffic deaths. "Historically, Horry County traffic fatalities involving an alcohol-impaired driver constitute approximately 39% of the total fatalities in that county each year," said Emily Thomas with the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/article52471305.html#storylink=cpy).

Traffic Accidents 2012-2016

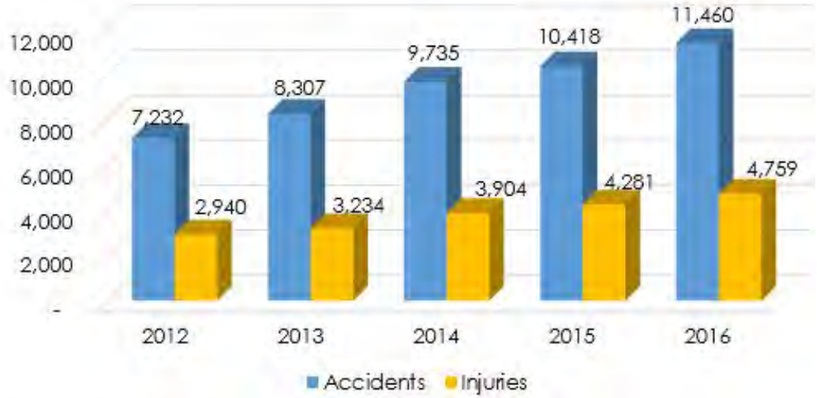


Traffic Fatalities 2012-2016



Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation

County-Wide Accident Trends 2012-2016



Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation

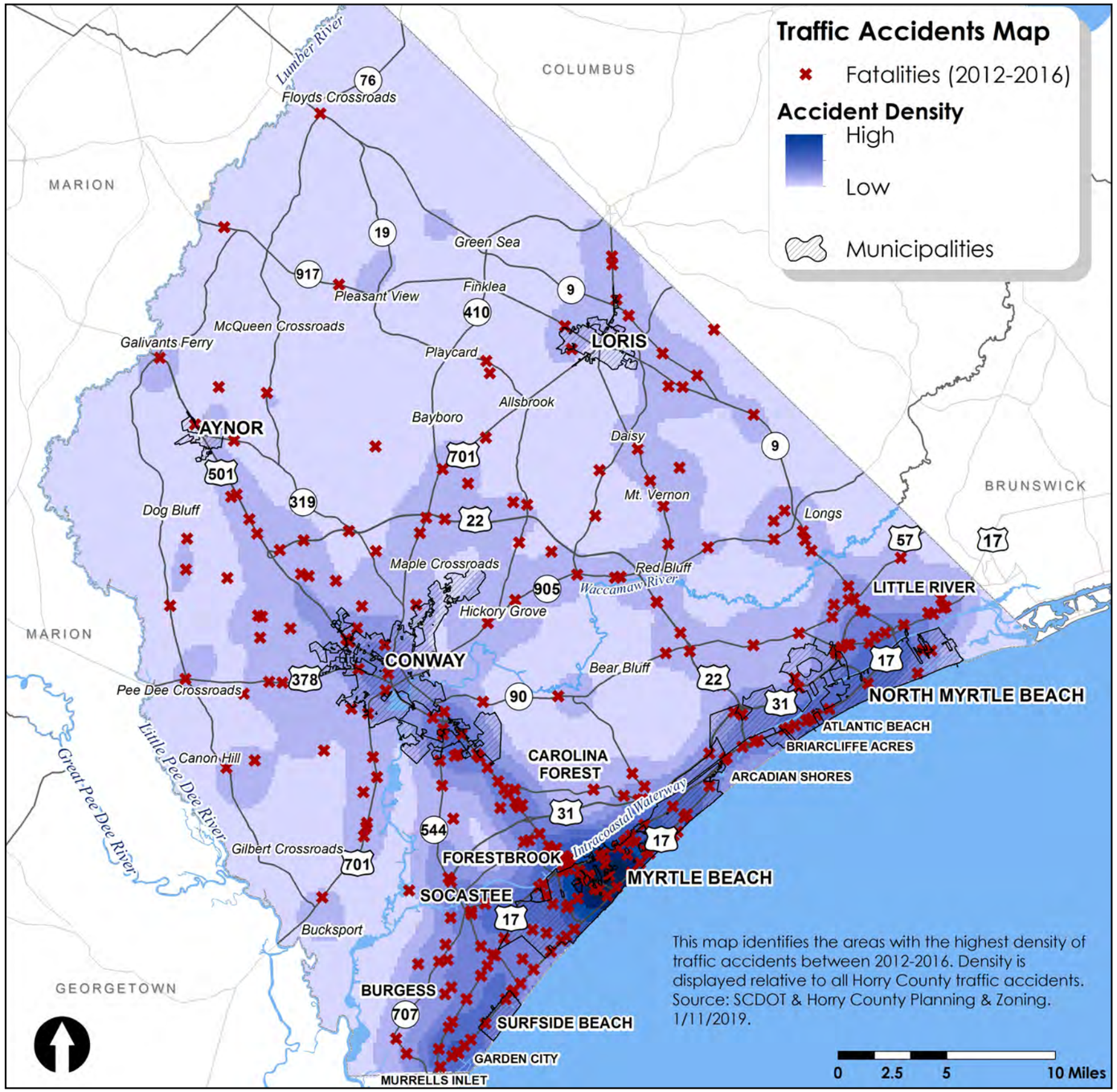
County-Wide Fatality Trends 2012-2016

Source: South Carolina Department of Transportation

Accident Trends 2012-2016

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Accidents	7,232	8,307	9,735	10,418	11,460
Injuries	2,940	3,234	3,904	4,281	4,759
Fatalities	52	55	58	81	70
Alcohol Related Accidents	422	448	470	413	543
Alcohol Related Injuries	266	252	289	298	382
Alcohol Related Fatalities	9	9	10	7	6
Bike & Pedestrian Related Accidents	83	118	118	128	125
Bike &Pedestrian Related Injuries	69	105	101	119	101
Bike & Pedestrian Related Fatalities	11	11	7	7	14

Sources: SC Department of Transportation



WAYFINDING

Navigation to and around the Grand Strand and within its individual communities can be improved through wayfinding signage. In 2013, GSATS initiated an origin-destination study to obtain a better idea of how drivers navigate throughout the Grand Strand. Despite Hwy 22 being available, in addition to the widening of Hwy 9, the study informed the County and GSATS that these roadways were still not being capitalized on by people traveling in from out of town to visit the beach. This was largely due to navigation systems not directing people to use these routes, and because there was limited directional signage leading to and around the Grand Strand. Since this study was completed, GSATS has funded and installed a major sign installation throughout the region. Local jurisdictions will be responsible for taking the signage to the next level by ensuring that people can easily be directed to major attractions and destinations. Ultimately, such signage should reduce the number of distracted drives and improve the flow of traffic in and out of the region.

Origin-Destination Study Conducted for GSATS

Source: WRCOG 2013, Grand Strand Routing and Wayfinding Plan

Examples from the Grand Strand Area Community Wayfinding Guidelines developed to create uniformity and consistency in wayfinding signage in the Grand Strand
Source: WMBF News Graphics: Grand Strand Routing and Wayfinging Plan

ROAD NETWORK FINDINGS

The roadway network is the most important aspect of Horry County's transportation system, as it bears the burden of transporting the majority of goods and people throughout the region. The region's economic vitality is dependent on this roadway network, which makes the area accessible for commuter, industrial, commercial, tourism and other day-to-day uses. This system should be viewed as an indispensable regional economic asset that requires constant reinvestment to protect the economic stability of the region. Maintenance and safety of the roadway network is a critical factor in ensuring the safe and efficient travel of both residents and visitors alike. In addition, there should be ongoing efforts to ensure easy navigability of our County. As our land use decisions are made, careful consideration should be made regarding the needs and capacity of the transportation system.

Source: NEATP, Revised from Wisconsin DOT image

COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets are streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shopping areas, bicycle to work, and take the bus to important destinations. Ultimately, complete streets can shape community form and interaction, can improve safety and efficiently accommodate all modes of travel, while simultaneously creating a greater sense of place and fostering quality of life.

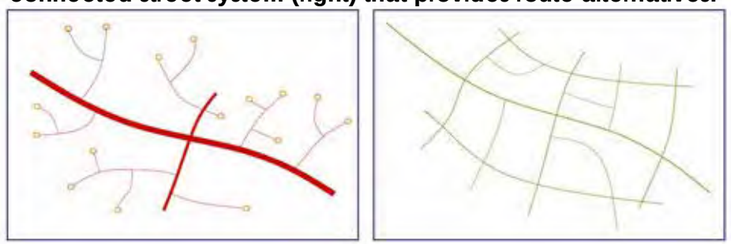
There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more. A Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from a Complete Street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

INTERCONNECTIVITY

In many places built since the 1950s, roadway design usually means a system of widely spaced, large arterials fed by smaller roadways that rarely connect with each other. This system concentrates motorized traffic on a limited number of large roads, which causes longer, indirect trips and limits opportunities for alternate routes. Such a network makes it difficult for people who might walk, bike, or take public transportation because the indirect routes lengthen their trips and force them onto roads that are usually not designed for their safety or comfort. Public transportation also has a difficult time serving isolated neighborhoods with only one or two entry or exit points. So, people end up driving, even for very short trips.

Connectivity (or permeability) refers to the directness of links and the density of connections in a transport network. A highly permeable network has many short links, numerous intersections, and minimal dead ends. As connectivity increases, travel distances decrease and route options increase, allowing more direct travel between destinations, creating a more accessible and resilient transportation system. The concept of interconnectivity is applicable at regional and neighborhood scale. Connected streets can reduce traffic congestion by dispersing traffic and offering travel options. Networks of connected Complete Streets can carry as many travelers as conventional sprawling roadway design, but do not rely on a sparse network of major arterials. An interconnected network of major and minor streets with some redundancy in traffic capacity on parallel major streets. Concern over a "loss" of traffic capacity can be tempered with "surplus" capacity elsewhere.

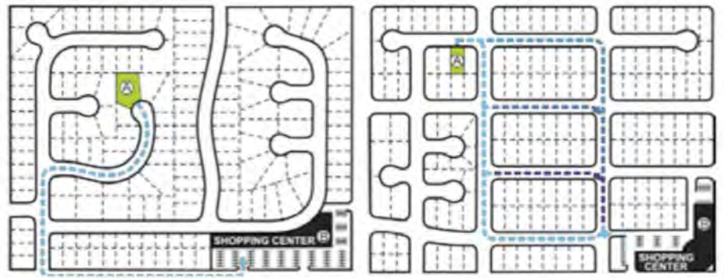
Limited connectivity relies on arterial system (left) verse an interconnected street system (right) that provides route alternatives.



Source: Northeast Area Transportation Plan

A network of Complete Streets works best if block size is reduced. Short blocks are important to people on bikes or on foot because they reduce the total distance traveled and provide direct access to properties. A smaller block structure also allows land use to evolve and adapt over time, providing development flexibility. After updating its City Code to achieve Complete Streets, North Myrtle Beach now requires most blocks to be human-scaled, between 300 and 400 feet long. In new major residential subdivisions; Horry County and Myrtle Beach require that blocks be no more than 1,800 feet. While this allows for environmental constraints, it does not prioritize the need for shorter block lengths and more walkable neighborhoods. The County also does not require road interconnectivity to adjacent subdivisions or shopping opportunities, although it does not prohibit it. The Future Land Use Map and Definitions within this plan calls for increased interconnectivity in suburban and urbanizing areas.

Neighborhood street design can result in longer trips and limited choice (left) or can provide easy access to internal and external destinations (right).



Source: Kimley-Horn Inc and Digital Media Productions

The County has standards for the number of entryways into a subdivision based on the number of units within the development. This is in large part for public safety purposes for emergency response. Access management techniques usually control and regulate the location, spacing, and design of driveways, medians, median openings, traffic signals, and freeway interchanges. By varying interconnectivity and access management standards by urban, suburban, and rural geographies, the County could have a greater capability to incorporate multi-modalism, enhance safety, develop community centers, and ultimately guide and enhance community character.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

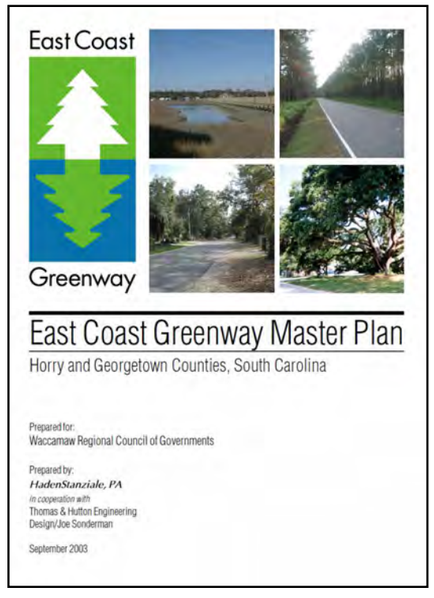
Alternative modes of transportation other than the automobile include such activities as walking or riding a bike either for recreational or work commuting purposes. In Horry County most bicycle and pedestrian facilities are located within incorporated municipalities, such as Aynor, Conway, Loris, Myrtle Beach and North Myrtle Beach. While similar facilities exist in the County, there are numerous opportunities to strengthen connectivity within adjoining communities and throughout the region. Because the majority of connections to major destinations rely on arterial roadways, the GSATS region has made it a policy to integrate bicycle and pedestrian facilities into all of its road projects, whether the development of new roads or the widening of existing facilities. This has resulted in the increase in bicycle and pedestrian facilities in unincorporated Horry County in recent years.

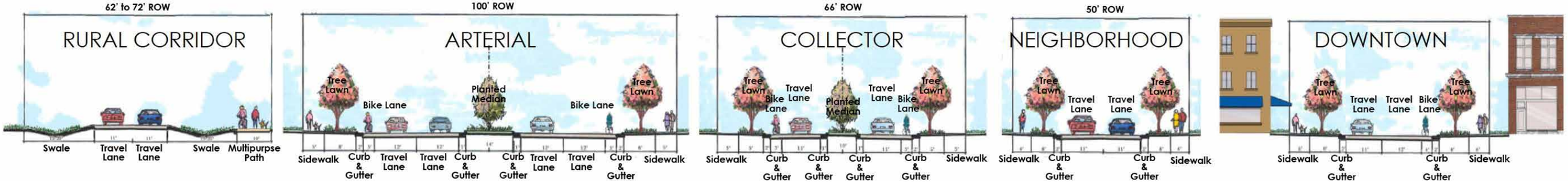
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities can be incorporated into most roadway designs, whether in a downtown, along a major thoroughfare or within a neighborhood. Design plays a significant role in making an inviting and safe place for walkers and cyclists. If not designed appropriately for road width and speed, a sidewalk or bike lane will not be used. Similarly, if safety measures are not put in place along off-road trails and greenways, they will go unused. The design standards for an urban area should vary from those in a suburban neighborhood, as the purposes and expectations of users vary in each area.

Planning and design of the bike and pedestrian infrastructure should build upon the existing segments and networks within the region and strive to implement facilities that attract new users while linking destination and providing more accessibility. The **Horry County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan** identifies many opportunities and programs to strengthen interconnectivity. These include areas of high bicycle and pedestrian demands, integration of Safe Routes to School principles, and multiple design standards of roadways to include sidewalks, multi-use paths, landscaped buffers, and intersection improvements. Beyond community needs, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan also addresses regional connectivity through such routes as the East Coast Greenway. Multiple sections have been completed in Horry County; however, the greatest constraint for the completion of the East Coast Greenway and other regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities is the lack of a dedicated funding source for their construction beyond the small amount that GSATS communities compete for each year. In unincorporated Horry County, the installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is largely dependent upon road widening projects or installation completed by developers.

As Horry County continues to grow, it will need to continue to build out its Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to include all unincorporated areas of the County. The County will also need to identify creative funding solutions to support growing recreational desires of our residents.

Typical cross-section of the East Coast Greenway in unincorporated Horry County.
Source: East Coast Greenway Master Plan for Horry and Georgetown Counties (pictured below)





Pedestrian Facilities can be incorporated into all road types. Source: Northeast Area Transportation Plan, adapted by Horry County Planning and Zoning

STREETSCAPING & GATEWAY SIGNAGE

Streetscaping is often combined with bicycle and pedestrian improvements and lighting to improve safety and provide a greater sense of belonging for its users. Streetscaping should be done according to road classification to ensure the right of way and traffic needs can accommodate it. Segments of a corridor with sufficient cross access, backdoor access, and onsite circulation may be candidates for median treatments. A median-divided roadway improves traffic flow, reduces congestion, and increases traffic safety, in addition to reinvestment into a community. While medians restrict some left-turn movements, overall traffic delays are reduced by removing conflicting vehicles from the mainline. Landscaping and gateway features incorporated into median treatments improve the aesthetics of the corridor, in turn encouraging investment in the area.

Hwy 501 Beautification Completed in 2013

Horry County has made extensive efforts in recent years to improve the gateway corridors into Horry County, including Hwy 501 between Carolina Forest and Myrtle Beach, Hwy 17 Business in Garden City, and the Hwy 17 and 22 Interchange in Arcadian Shores. Additional beautification efforts are underway at the Hwy 17 Bypass and Holmestown Road intersection. Other projects, such as the beautification of the Hwy 501 corridor between Hwy 544 and Carolina Forest Blvd, the Hwy 544 and Hwy 17 Bypass Interchange, and the Hwy 17 Bypass in Garden City, are planned. While funding can be secured for the installation, there is no dedicated funding source or staffing to cover ongoing maintenance costs, such as pruning, plant replacement, mowing, litter removal, irrigation, and lighting.

Beautification efforts can easily incorporate gateway signage to provide a greater sense of place.

Lighting is another component of streetscaping that can not only improve safety, but also help people know that they have arrived to a destination. Roadway lighting needs vary throughout the County based upon road type, as illumination for a highway is different from the lighting needs along a boulevard or park setting. Lighting is funded in a few special tax districts in unincorporated Horry County and has partially been funded through Accomodation Tax allocations in places like Garden City and Arcadian Shores. If a community desires roadway lighting, it is best funded through homeowners' associations or through special tax districts.

Horry County continues to partner with community groups via Keep Horry County Beautiful to advance private beautification efforts. The success of these partnerships can be seen along Carolina Forest Blvd and River Oaks Drive, where Beautify Carolina Forest has taken the initiative to plant and maintain the medians in that community. Horry County assisted with that effort by providing landscape design and recommendations. The County has also worked with other community groups to install gateway signage, but there are many more community and business partnerships to be forged to further community branding and streetscape improvements.

COMPLETE STREETS FINDINGS

Complete Streets is a common way to enhance and create a sense of community, promote active lifestyles, and provide equitable access to shopping, employment, and community centers. There are multiple steps that the County should take to pursue a complete streets network, ranging from changes in land use to making improvements along existing roadways. The Future Land Use Map, zoning, and Land Development Regulations serve as mechanisms to support the development of traditional communities with complete streets. Additionally, funding and community partnerships will be needed to foster unique identities through streetscaping and community signage.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Public transit is the transport of passengers by group travel systems available for use by the general public, typically managed on a schedule, operated on established routes, and that charge a posted fee for each trip. Examples of public transit include buses, trolleys, passenger trains, and airlines. Private operators, including limousine, taxi services, and shared ride (Uber/Lyft) are also available throughout Horry County.

Within the Grand Strand area, transit service provides transportation and mobility options for the residents each day. Not only do the residents of the Grand Strand area rely on these options, but so do tourists which represent a significant amount of the population during the peak tourist season. Access to jobs, medical care, shopping, recreational activities, needed services, and all other aspects of daily life are provided by these options. These needs increase tremendously during the peak tourist season and continue through the remaining off-peak season. As the area's population has grown, and continues to do so, convenient and reliable transit service will become an even greater necessity.

WACCAMAW REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Public transit in Horry County is mainly comprised of fixed route and demand response services. Bus riders typically fall into one of two categories – choice or captive. Choice transit riders choose to leave their vehicle at home to save time and money or for other reasons, while captive riders use transit because they have no other option. Captive riders include those too young to drive, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those without the financial means to own and operate a personal vehicle.

Waccamaw Regional Transit Authority (Coast RTA) is the major provider for transit services in Georgetown and Horry Counties. Coast RTA is based in Conway, South Carolina and offers a variety of service options for residents traveling around the Grand Strand area, including fixed-route services, curb-to-curb paratransit service and ADA. The Authority receives part of its operating funds from Horry County. Beginning July 1, 2018, $6.50 from registered vehicles in County Road Use Fees goes to Coast RTA.

System wide ridership for the Coast RTA has increased in the most recent years. Approximately 1,520 average weekday boardings, 1,450 average Saturday boardings, and 1,132 average Sunday boardings throughout the system. Overall annual ridership for FY2016 through 2018 is shown in the chart below.

Paratransit Services

Year	Transit	Paratransit Services	System Total
2016	476,995	3,942	485,076
2017	501,948	11,875	513,823
2018	509,586	13,695	523,281

The Coast RTA operates fixed-route regularly scheduled bus services daily, from approximately 4:00 a.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m. depending on the specific route. There are 10 routes that provide service within the City of Andrews, Conway, Georgetown, Myrtle Beach, and now Loris and Bucksport. The current fleet consists of 23 vehicles for fixed route and 10 vehicles for paratransit.

Coast RTA now offers advertising opportunities.

Coast RTA also offers a fixed route serving beach hotels and Broadway at the Beach, known as the Entertainment Shuttle Route. With projected increases in population and tourist expectancy, the expansion of this service to the entirety of the Grand Stand region could be needed in the future.

Coast RTA has a few formalized bus stops within the City of Myrtle Beach, but there are no formalized bus pull-offs or covered seating areas in unincorporated Horry County. Coast RTA still largely works off of a flag system along its fixed routes, meaning someone must wave them down to stop. However, Coast RTA has initiated its Bus Stop Designation Program where stops are formally established with a sign installed.

Beyond its fixed routes, Coast RTA offers **Paratransit Services** for persons who are unable to access its fixed routes independently and safely due to physical or mental disabilities. Coast RTA's Paratransit Program is a curb-to-curb advanced reservation, shared ride, transportation service. It is openly available to anyone pre-qualified (and certified by a medical professional) on the basis of having a physical or mental disability (whether short-term or permanent). Passengers requiring door-to-door service in order to use paratransit may request a modification of this policy when scheduling their trips. In such cases, the driver will provide assistance on a door-to-door basis. Service is provided on a time and space availability basis. Any persons who are currently ADA certified or qualified for the Coast RTA Paratransit program will be permitted to ride the Coast RTA fixed routes at no cost.

RAIL

As the sole freight hauler on rail, RJ Corman operates a short line Carolina Lines between Chadbourn, NC and Myrtle Beach. The portion of the line between Conway and Myrtle Beach is owned by Horry County and leased to RJ Corman. They received a $9.7 million grant last year through the US Department of Transportation to upgrade rail lines to increase haul speed and weight. Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development and the County are working together to expand business growth along this route. This is further addressed in the Economic Development Chapter. As upgrades to the rail line and its usage increases, public safety improvements will also need to be made to crossings and traffic signals in close proximity to the active portion of the line.

Horry County currently lacks any passenger rail lines. The nearest station is the AMTRAK located in Florence, and there are not any spur lines to the Grand Strand.

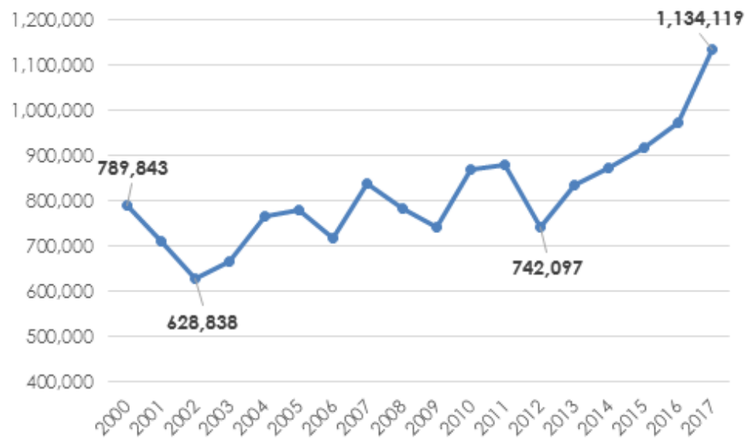
AIRLINES

Horry County owns and operates four airports. These include one commercial service airport serving the greater Myrtle Beach Region, known as the Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR), as well as three general aviation airports - Grand Strand, Conway, and Loris Twin Cities. The Grand Strand Airport (CRE), located in the city of North Myrtle Beach, serves private and corporate aircraft. The Loris Twin Cities Airport (5J9) is an unattended public use airport that is used for training for practice approaches and landings. The Conway-Horry County Airport (HYW), located five miles west of Conway, provides operations and services for the growing general aviation community in the western part of Horry County.

The Department of Airports is a department of Horry County and receives its funding for operations and maintenance of County airports through user fees and charges on aeronautical activities at the airport. No County general fund taxes are used to support the airports. Primary funding for most major capital improvements is obtained through the federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and from South Carolina Division of Aeronautics.

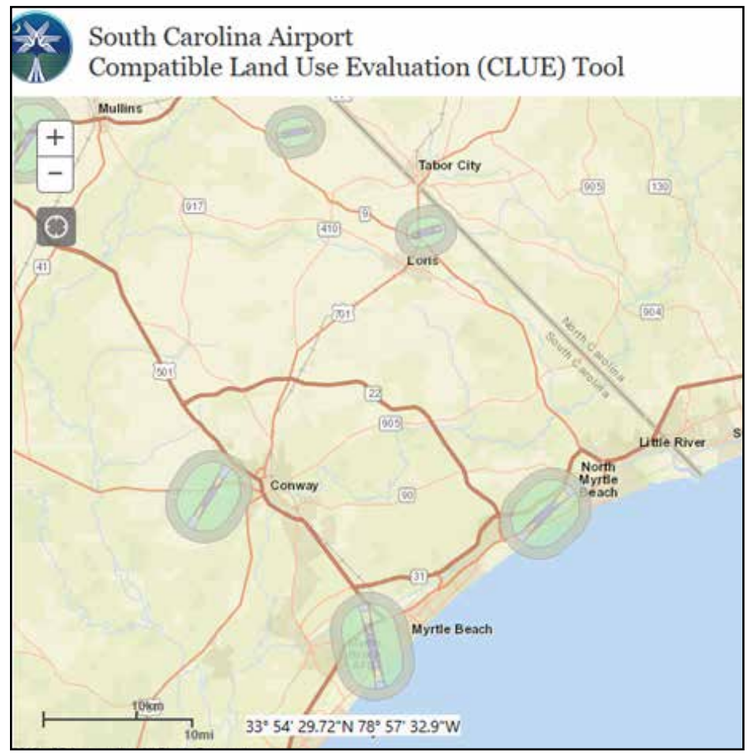
Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR) is the County's sole international commercial aviation facility, with ten airlines offering scheduled air service to and from the Grand Strand. They set a record number of passengers in 2017. The number of passengers are expected to correlate with the local population, the number of non-stop destinations in and out of the airport, and the sheer volume of tourists visiting our area. The economic impact and opportunities associated with the Myrtle Beach International Airport is discussed further in the Economic Development Chapter.

Deplanements by Year



Source: Myrtle Beach International Airport

The location of airports has an impact on land use, as the County has to evaluate new development and construction within the approach zones of each airport. Title 55, Section 55-13-5 of the South Carolina State Code of Laws requires that certain development applications in specified Airport Safety Zones and Airport Land Use Zones, be submitted by local government planning, zoning, and building permit officials to South Carolina Aeronautics Commission (SCAC) for review and comment. The SCAC has a tool known as the Airport Compatible Land Use Evaluation ("CLUE") Tool. The tool is designed to evaluate land use compatibility near airports.



OTHER TRANSIT PROVIDERS

Several private service operators, such as shuttle, limousine, and taxi services transport residents throughout eastern South Carolina and southeastern North Carolina to job sites along the Grand Strand area. There are also private ridesharing services, such as Uber and Lyft, which provide additional mobility options to those with a smartphone by allowing them to request a ride through an application. These private services have the potential to allow for individuals to move throughout the area and not rely on public transportation services such as buses or demand response options. There are also nonprofit services who provide door to door service for home bound seniors and chronically ill and disabled students, such as Neighbor to Neighbor.

Coastal Carolina University provides free shuttle service for its students around campus, including routes from university housing at University Place, the main campus and the east campus. They operate fixed route service during the day and on demand at night. They also offer shuttles to airports and Amtrak train service stations for breaks and holidays.

Beyond what is available locally, there are a few transit service providers located outside the GSATS region that provide demand response service in our area, including:

- Williamsburg County Transit Authority
- Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
- Intercity bus service: Greyhound, and Southeastern Stages

PUBLIC TRANSIT FINDINGS

A variety of public transit options are available in Horry County. These options include Coast RTA offering fixed route services, entertainment route services, and paratransit services for regions of Horry and Georgetown Counties. Coast RTA largely relies on a flagging system and has few designated and improved stops. Horry County should work with Coast RTA and identify locations for bus stops. It should also work to coordinate with Coast RTA to establish design guidelines into its land development regulations and the design of future roadways and road widening projects. This is an important step in ensuring reliability for public transit users, in addition to expanding the usership of locals and vacationers.

Beyond the bus system, there are private providers that meet local transportation needs. At this time, there are no designated places within local cities and areas with an active nightlife for private transport services to pick up riders for safe passage home.

Services transporting people in and out of Horry County and the Grand Strand, are limited to coaches and to Myrtle Beach International Airport. Additional growth is expected at MYR, and continued expansions and improvements to the airport are expected.

PLANNED PROJECTS

There are numerous transportation projects in the planning and design phase in Horry County. Many of these projects have been in the making for multiple decades and are still working to come to fruition. Some projects are funded; however, there are a large number of projects lacking adequate funding or funding at all.

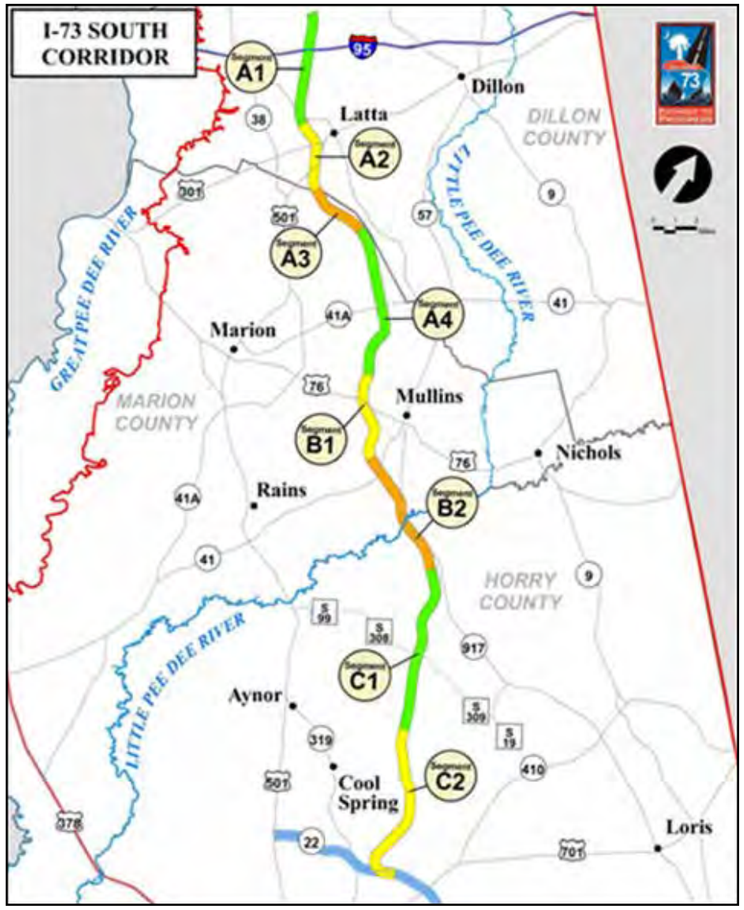
ROADWAY DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENTS

The Interstate Highway 73/74 Corridors

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) designated the I-73/74 North-South Corridor as a "High Priority Corridor" that has been defined to run from Charleston, SC through Winston-Salem, NC and to continue north through the states of Virginia and West Virginia before splitting entirely at Portsmouth, OH with I-74 turning west to its current end in Cincinnati, OH and I-73 continuing north to its planned termination in Saint Sault Marie, MI.

Interstate 73 was identified as a high priority route from Michigan to South Carolina in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA) that the US Congress passed in 1991. The "Southern Project" portion of Interstate 73 runs from Interstate 95 to State Route 22 (Conway Bypass, or Veteran's Highway) in the Myrtle Beach/Conway area.

The 42-mile southern section of the I-73 Project (I-73 South) will extend from South Carolina Highway 22 (SC-22; Conway Bypass/Veteran's Highway) in the Myrtle Beach/Conway area in a new alignment east of Aynor to the northwest between Mullins and Marion, intersecting I-95 just west of Dillon. The purpose of I-73 South is to provide an interstate link between the Myrtle Beach region and I-95 that serves residents, businesses, and tourists by improving travel times, level of service (LOS), and national/regional connectivity, as well as facilitating hurricane evacuation. Right-of-Way plans are complete for I-73 South, and construction plans are available from US 501 to I-95. I-73 South is expected to open to traffic in 2025 and is expected to cost between $2.8 and $3.4 billion.



I-73 South Corridor
Source: http://www.i73insc.com/ROW.shtml

Interstate Highway 74 is proposed to run roughly parallel to the NC/SC border from Interstate 95 and run towards Wilmington, NC before turning south and heading to Charleston. NCDOT competed a feasibility study that would turn 74 southward near Bolton, NC and follow 211 towards Supply, NC and follow the US Hwy 17 south towards Shallotte, NC and connect with the northward extension of SC 31 Carolina Bays Parkway.

Proposed I-74 Route to Myrtle Beach.
Source: NCDOT I-74 Feasibility Study

The Southern Evacuation Lifeline (SELL)

With increasing numbers of summer tourists and year-round residents, the provision of a more convenient evacuation route between US 17 and US 501 from the South Strand to areas further inland has become a necessity. The SELL task force was formed to promote the development of an Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate alternatives for providing an additional evacuation route across the Waccamaw River. The SELL is a proposed 28-mile, multi-lane, limited-access toll facility that is proposed to extend from US 17 near Garden City to US 501 at the SC 22 interchange.

On January 19, 2006 the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Commission allocated the $1 million of state funds required to match at least 20% of the $4 million of federal transportation funds that were made available to this project. RIDE-3 is supporting a portion of the land acquisition to support the development of the section connecting Burgess to Bucksport.

Carolina Bays Parkway (SC Hwy 31)

Another project of regional significance is the extension of Carolina Bays Parkway (SC 31). The southern connection from SC 544 to SC 707 (just north of Moss Creek Road), a distance of approximately 3.8 miles is about 80% complete.

The northward extension of the Carolina Bays Parkway into North Carolina is expected to connect from its existing terminus as SC 9 to US 17 on the north side of Shallotte, NC. NCDOT is currently administering the contract to conduct the preliminary project development and environmental studies. NCDOT/SCDOT estimate the cost at $434.8 million ($185 million in South Carolina and $249.8 million in North Carolina).

The extension would provide a more direct and efficient movement of traffic seeking to bypass congestion within the areas of Calabash in North Carolina as well as Little River and the Grand Strand areas in South Carolina. It would also improve traffic flow and safety at the intersection of SC 9 and SC 57 and provide a more direct route for coastal truck traffic moving through North Carolina.

Although the project is funded for study, no schedule has been established for right-of-way acquisition or construction. Horry County RIDE-3 is funding up to $125 million of the estimate $185 million in construction on the South Carolina portion of the project. North Carolina has not currently funded anything other than the environmental study.

Both new interstate highways, the extension of Carolina Bays Parkway, and furthering the design of SELL will be essential for establishing better national connectivity to the Grand Strand, thus providing not only long-term stability to its tourism economy, but also providing a vital prerequisite for achieving necessary economic diversification and job creation within this labor market. These interstate highways will also alleviate traffic on currently congested highways throughout the region.

RIDE Program

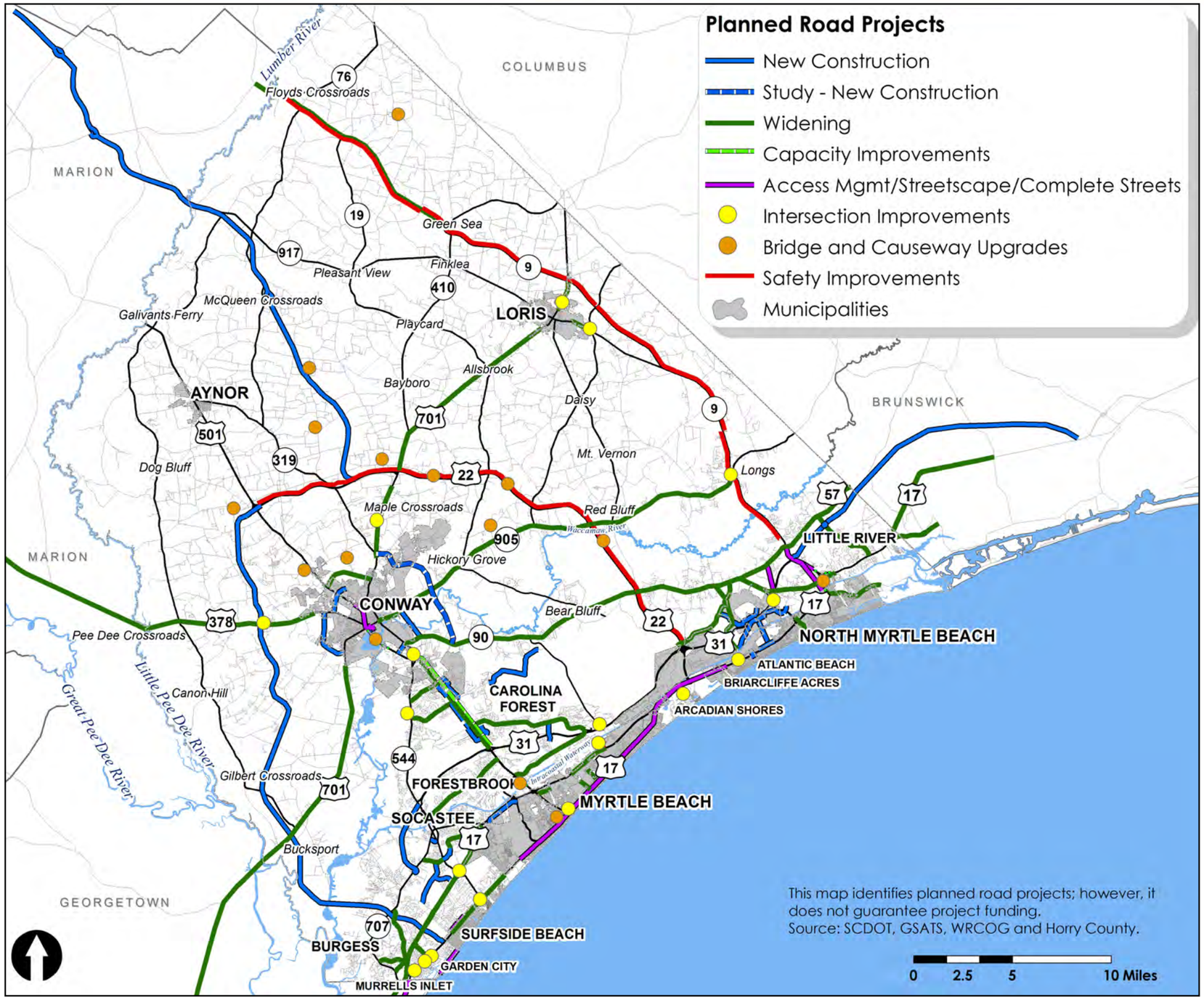
The Road Improvement and Development Effort (RIDE) program was initiated in Horry County in 1996 to determine the short and long-term transportation infrastructure needs for the County. We are now on our third local option sales tax. The initial RIDE sales tax and matching funds from the State Infrastructure Bank raised $1.2 billion towards road projects, including the construction of Hwy 22 (Veteran's Hwy), the first segment of Hwy 31 (Carolina Bays Pkwy), Robert Edge Pkwy, the Fantasy Harbour Bridge, and the widening of Hwy 544 and US 17 Bypass.

The RIDE-2 initiative was a $425 million dollar effort to improve 100 miles of county dirt roads, resurface 67 miles of county paved roads, widen Hwy 707, create a grade-separated interchange at Hwy 707 and Hwy 17 at the Backgate, widen Hwy 707, construct an overpass in Aynor over Hwy 501, widen Glenns Bay Road and create a grade-separated interchange at its intersection with Hwy 17 Bypass, and pave International Drive to Hwy 90. Horry County also utilized $93.6 million from this initiative as a match to the South Carolina State Transportation Infrastructure Bank and was awarded a $235 million grant for design, permitting and right of way acquisition of the Carolina Bays Parkway Extension from Hwy 544 to Hwy 707.

Horry County is currently collecting funds to support projects within the Ride-3 program. In November 2016, 69.1% of voters approved a 1-cent capital sales tax on all retail sales, accommodations and prepared food/ beverages. Groceries (unprepared food) will be exempt from the sales tax. Horry County is slated to receive $592 million over the 8 year life of the 1-cent Capital Projects Sales Tax that will expire on April 30, 2025. RIDE-3 will consist of five paving projects to include one hundred miles of dirt roads, resurfacing one hundred miles of paved roads and fourteen major road construction projects. The status of these projects can be followed on the Horry County website at: http://www.horrycounty.org/Ride3.

Identified Road Projects

The following identifies project needs that were included within the GSATS 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the 2040 Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan, state Gas Funded Projects, and additional projects that were identified needs or anticipated needs based off of future growth projections. Note that there are far more road project needs than there is funding. While a project may be identified below, it does not guarantee that the project has dedicated funding allocated to it. The list of projects does not include those within area municipalities, with the exception of those projects funded by RIDE 3. This list also does not include bicycle and pedestrian projects, other than those road improvements that include such facilities.



Location	Type	Plan
Alma Rd (S-142)	Bridge over Huggins Swamp	State Gas Tax
Augusta Plantation Extension	Road extension connecting with Revolutionary War Way, including an interchange over Hwy 31.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Big Block Road	Widen and realign. Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities	GSATS 2040 MTP
Broadway (S-15)	Bridge over Withers Swash, City of Myrtle Beach	GSATS TIP/ State Gas Tax
Brunson Spring Rd (S-97)	Bridge over Palmetto Swamp	State Gas Tax
Carolina Forest Boulevard Widening	Complete Widening of Carolina Forest Blvd to River Oaks Drive. Improved road will include a multi-use path, 4-lanes (with turning lanes at intersections) and traffic signals as determined by traffic study during design phase.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Champions Blvd Extension	Extend Champions Blvd in North Myrtle Beach to connect with Long Bay Rd	GSATS 2040 MTP
Chestnut and Kings Road Intersection	Realignment	
Conway Perimeter Road Phase II	Construct new road with multi-use path from US 378 (at El-Bethel Road) to US 701 South. The new road will feature 4-lanes with median and turning lanes at the intersection.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Cultra Road Widening	Widening	
East Coat Greenway	Portion of Project	2015-2022 TIP
Forestbrook Road Widening	Widen Forestbrook Road between Hwy 501 and Dick Pond Road. Improvements will feature 5-lanes including a center turn lane and the installation of bike/pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and wider travel lanes.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Fred Nash Boulevard Connection to Harrelson Boulevard	Construct new 3-lane road including a center turn lane to extend Fred Nash Blvd around the end of the airport runway (MYR) to provide a direct connection to Harrelson Blvd. The project includes bicycle facilities.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Garden City Connector	Widen and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities	GSATS 2040 MTP
Gardner Lacy Extension	Extension of Gardner Lacy to International Dr	
Good Luck Rd (S-569)	Bridge over Lousing Swamp	State Gas Tax
Good Luck Rd (S-569)	Bridge over Smith Swamp	State Gas Tax
Hwy 111	Safety and capacity improvements	
Hwy 134	Bridge over Jenkins Swamp	State Gas Tax
Hwy 17 and Champions Blvd Connector	Construct connector bridge between US 17 and Champions Blvd in North Myrtle Beach between 17th and 21st Ave	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Bridges in North Myrtle	Replace Hwy 17 bridges at flyover	GSATS 2040 MTP

Location	Type	Plan
Hwy 17 Business Intersection Improve-ments-Garden City	Improve capacity and safety at the following three intersections in Garden City (intersection widening, turn lane extensions, and other operational improvements): 1) US 17 Bus @ Inlet Square Mall/Mt. Gilead Road. 2) US 17 Bus @ Atlantic Avenue. 3) US 17 Bus @ Garden City Connector/Pine Ave.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Business, Surfside	Eliminate Frontage Roads along US 17 Business in Surfside, add additional turn lanes	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Bypass	Widen from Backgate to Hwy 544	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Bypass	Widen from Hwy 544 to Georgetown Countyline	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Bypass & Hwy 544	Interchange and intersection improvements at Hwy 17 Bypass and Hwy 544 from Beaver Run Blvd to South Strand Commons, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Bypass to Hwy 17 Business Connec-tor Road in Garden City	Construction new road connecting Hwy 17 Bypass and Business, between Glens Bay Rd and Garden City Connector. Possibly constructed as the corridor leading into the SELL	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 17 Bypass Widening	Widen to 6 lane between Farrow Pkwy and Shetland Dr	2015-2022 TIP
Hwy 17 Bypass/International/Robert Grissom	Ramp and merge improvements	
Hwy 179	Improve and widen. Incorporate multi-purpose path, as part of East Coast Greenway Route.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 22 Elevation	Raise Hwy 22 from Hwy 905 to Hwy 905	
Hwy 22 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC-22 from Hwy 501 to Hucks Rd (L-1769)	State Gas Tax
Hwy 22 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC-22 from Hucks Rd (L-1769) to Hwy 905	State Gas Tax
Hwy 22 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC-22 from Hwy 905 to Water Tower Rd (L-369)	State Gas Tax
Hwy 22 Upgrades	Upgrade Hwy 22 to Interstate status alongside the completion of I-73. This will ensure an official interstate can access the beach.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 31 (Carolina Bays Parkway) Extension to SC/NC Line (I-74 Connection)	Final phase of SC Hwy 31 (Carolina Bays Parkway). Build new limited-access freeway to extend SC Hwy 31 from SC Hwy 9 to NC State line.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 31/Hwy 111	Interchange at new Carolina Bays Parkway extension and Hwy 111	
Hwy 31/International/Robert Grissom	Signalization and turn lane improvements	
Hwy 319	Extension South to International Drive and Hwy 90. Initiate feasibility study.	
Hwy 378	Widening	
Hwy 378 & S-134	Intersection Improvements	2040 RLRTP Plan
Hwy 472	Bridge over Kingston Lake	State Gas Tax
Hwy 501	Capacity improvements between Hwy 31 and 544	

Location	Type	Plan
Hwy 501	Raise Hwy 501 near Lake Busbee and the Waccamaw River	
Hwy 501 Bridge into Myrtle Beach	Replace and Widen. Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 501 Corridor Improvement (SC Hwy 31 to SC 544)	Complete 6-lane widening and signalized intersection improvements on US Hwy 501 from SC Hwy 31 to US Hwy 501/544 Interchange.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 501 Realignment from Broadway St. to 7th Ave North (City of Myrtle Beach)	Realign Hwy 501 at Broad Street intersection to connect to 7th Avenue N at Oak Street in City of Myrtle Beach (new alignment). Install sidewalks and intersection improvements on 7th Avenue N, between Oak Street and North Kings Hwy.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 544 and Myrtle Ridge	Turn lane improvements	
Hwy 548	Bridge over Mclean Swamp	State Gas Tax
Hwy 57	Widen	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 701 & Fox Bay	Intersection Improvements	2040 RLRTP Plan
Hwy 701 & Harris Shortcut	Intersection Improvements	2040 RLRTP Plan
Hwy 701 & Industrial Park	Intersection Improvements, turn lane	2040 RLRTP Plan
Hwy 701 N	Widening from Hwy 22 to Loris	
Hwy 701 N Widening North Conway	Widen US Hwy 701 north of Conway from SC Hwy 319 to Hwy 22. Improved road will feature 5-lanes including a center turn lane and installation of bike/pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and wider travel lanes.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 701 S	Widen Hwy 701 from Conway to Georgetown Countyline	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 701 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to US 701 from Georgetown/Horry County line to Copperhead Rd (L-435)	State Gas Tax
Hwy 701 Widening North of Loris	Widen US Hwy 701 north of Loris from end of existing 3-lane section (Dogwood St) to SC Hwy 9 interchange. Improved road will include turning lanes and installation of bike/pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and wider travel lanes.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 707 Connector	Road Extension	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 9	Access management improvements from SC 57 to US 17 interchange. Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities and median beautification.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 9 & Heritage	Intersection Improvements	2040 RLRTP Plan
Hwy 9 & Hwy 905	Intersection Improvements	2040 RLRTP Plan
Hwy 9 Bypass Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC 9 from Hwy 66 to Marlowe Cir (L-2088)	State Gas Tax
Hwy 9 Bypass Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC 9 from Bayview Dr (S-142) to Hwy 66	State Gas Tax
Hwy 9 East Widening Loris	Widen SC Hwy 9 east of Loris from the end of the existing 4-lane section to intersection of Hwy 66. Improved road will be expanded to 4-lanes with sidewalks.	GSATS 2040 MTP

Location	Type	Plan
Hwy 9 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC 9 from Marlowe Cir (L-2088) to Charter Dr (L-3478)	State Gas Tax
Hwy 9 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC 9 near US 76 to Bay View Dr (S-142)	State Gas Tax
Hwy 9 Widening	Completion of widening project to Countyline	
Hwy 90	Widen, 3 Phases	GSATS 2040 MTP
Hwy 90 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC 90 from SC-22 to Robert Edge Pkwy	State Gas Tax
Hwy 90 Safety Improvements	Rural Safety Improvements to SC 90 from Lee's Landing Cir (S-1135) to SC-22	State Gas Tax
Hwy 905	Widening	
Hwy 905 & Old Reaves Ferry Rd	Intersection Improvements	2040 RLRTP Plan
I-73	Extension of Interstate 73 to Horry County	GSATS 2040 MTP
Kings Hwy Improvements	67th Ave Myrtle Beach to 48th Ave in North Myrtle Beach	GSATS 2040 MTP
Little River Neck Road	Widen and include a multipurpose path	GSATS 2040 MTP
Louisville Rd (S-669)	Bridge over Maple Swamp	State Gas Tax
McDowell Shortcut	Widening with bicycle and pedestrian improvements	
Middle Ridge Extension 1	Extend Middle Ridge Drive east (Myrtle Ridge Dr to W. Perry Road)-and west (Wal-Mart to Singleton Ridge). Extension of collector roads (Postal Way and Middle Ridge Avenue).	
Middle Ridge Extension 2	Southern extension from Legends Drive	
Mt. Zion Road	Improve alignment of Mt. Zion Road (SC 90 to SC 57)	GSATS 2040 MTP
Myrtle Ridge Road	Widen	GSATS 2040 MTP
Oak St Ext (S-107)	Bridge over Brown Swamp	State Gas Tax
Palmetto Pointe Blvd Extension	Construct extension of Palmetto Pointe Blvd to connect to SC Hwy 544 at the Big Block Road intersection. New road will include 2-lanes and bike/pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and wider travel lanes.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Postal Way	Extend Postal Way east to Waccamaw Pines Dr and install required intersection improvements and sidewalks (including Postal Way @ Carolina Forest Blvd/Renee Dr/Oak Heard Rd).	GSATS 2040 MTP
Postal Way Extension to Atlantic Center	Road Extension	GSATS 2040 MTP
River Oaks Drive	Widen and include multi-purpose path	GSATS 2040 MTP

Location	Type	Plan
Rural Road Improvements	Shoulder widening, safety improvements, and resurfacing	
Sandridge Road Extension	Connect Sandridge Rd to	GSATS 2040 MTP
Scipio Lane Extension	Extend to Big Block Road. Incorporate multipurpose path	GSATS 2040 MTP
Sea Mountain Hwy	Widen Sea Mountain Hwy from SC 9 to the Intracoastal Waterway Bridge. Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilitates.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Singleton Ridge Road	Widen and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities	GSATS 2040 MTP
Southern Evacuation Lifeline (SELL)	Environmental Studies & ROW Funding to complete the final environmental impact studies required to obtain Record of Decision (ROD) for future roadway. The land purchase for the right-of-way of the final alignment will be identified in the Record of Decision.	GSATS 2040 MTP
Southern Evacuation Lifeline (SELL)	Complete acquisition and construction following work completed with RIDE 3 funding	GSATS 2040 MTP
Tournament Blvd	Improve Tournament Blvd between McDowell Shortcut and Hwy 17 Bypass	GSATS 2040 MTP
Tournament Blvd	Widening to Hwy 707 with bicycle and pedestrian improvements	
Waccamaw Drive	Upgrade Waccamaw Drive from Melody Ln to Atlantic Avenue to Complete Streets Model	
Water Tower Road and Long Bay Rd	Widen	GSATS 2040 MTP

OTHER TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Beyond roadway improvements, there are other transportation projects in the area that will improve the region's quality of life.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

Identified bicycle and pedestrian projects can be found within the **East Coast Greenway Master Plan for Horry and Georgetown Counties**, the **Horry County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**, and the **Northeast Area Transportation Plan**. While there are numerous project needs identified, there is limited funding dedicated to support such improvements, unless they coincide with major roadway improvements along the same corridors.

Coast RTA

In order to better serve and expand its ridership, permanent bus stops are needed throughout the County. The installation of sheltered benches and bus pull off areas with ADA accessibility are needed in strategic locations throughout the County and in the urban areas. Additionally, a new Coast RTA hub is needed in a location that is more central to its ridership and destinations. Such a facility is best located in the City of Myrtle Beach and will allow Coast RTA to expand the types of services it provides and the routes within the cities. As Coast RTA grows, it will also need strategically located auxiliary maintenance and bus storage facilities.

Railroad

Continued improvements along the RJ Corman line are underway to improve the railroad travel speeds. Improvements east of Gardner Lacy Road may also be necessary to attract additional industry. At such a time that the railroad east of Gardner Lacy Road is deemed not viable, the County and the City of Myrtle Beach will need to evaluate alternative transportation options.

Airports

Myrtle Beach International Airport is currently going through a master planning effort in order to identify upgrades that will be necessary to accommodate future growth in tourism, business travel, and expanded delivery and export of goods.

PLANNED PROJECTS FINDINGS

Horry County has a vast amount of planned transportation projects. With previous success of the RIDE II program, RIDE-3 consists of five major paving projects, the resurfacing of 100 miles of paved roads and paving 100 miles of

dirt roads. Other planned projects within Horry County include Interstate Highway 73/74 corridors, The Southern Evacuation Lifeline (SELL), and the extension of Carolina Boys Parkway (SC Hwy 31). While the County has a prethera of transportation projects, there is limited funds to achieve the identified and projected needs. These projects will need to be continually reevaluated at the state, regional, and local level to ensure that they remain relevant, and to ensure the projects are prioritized based off of funding availability and need.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

Road projects are traditionally financed through federal, state, and local funds primarily derived from taxes on fuel and fees from vehicle registrations. Transit projects are also funded through federal, state, and local sources, as well as revenue received through fares.

Beyond allocations made from SCDOT and GSATS, transportation funding options include, road fees, Local Option Sales Taxes, State Transportation Infrastructure Bank (STIB) and the County Transportation Committees (CTC). Privately funded transportation improvements can include Impact Fees, Tax Increment Financing, Municipal Improvement Districts, Development Agreements or other private investment.

FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS

Signed into law in December 2015, the **Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)** provides modest increases in federal highway and transit spending, allowing states greater long-term funding certainty and streamlines the federal project approval process. The five-year, $305 billion FAST Act will provide a boost of approximately 15% in national highway funding and 18% in national transit funding over the duration of the program, which expires in 2020. The FAST Act funds the Federal Highway Administration (FHA), which allocates money to the state, which is allocated by formula to GSATS. The FAST Act does not provide adequate funding to meet the nation's need for highway and transit improvements and does not include a long-term and sustainable funding source.

GSATS is funded by a mixture of federal and ftate transportation dollars. The SCDOT "Guideshare" Program supports the GSATS MTA based on population and averages around $7.6 million per year to the urban region of Horry and Georgetown counties. Those funds support the implementation of the 2015-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the GSATS area, which is a five-year program of transportation capital projects together with a three-year estimate of transit capital and maintenance requirements. While the TIP is usually approved biennially, the document may be amended throughout the year. The TIP may also include regional highway projects that are being implemented by the state, City and County for which federal funding is requested. This is to ensure that the region is eligible for matching grant funds. The TIP will be revisited often to ensure that it aligns with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the state's Transportation Improvement Plan. As the available funding and priorities change over time at the local and state level, they can be tracked on the GSATS website at: http://www.gsats.org/index.php/tip/.

State Infrastructure Bank

The State Infrastructure Bank (SIB) stretches taxpayer dollars by leveraging federal seed money in partnership with local governments and private interests. The South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank was created by Act Number 148 of 1997. The purpose of the SIB is to select and assist in financing major qualified projects by providing loans and other financial assistance for constructing and improving highway and transportation facilities necessary for public purposes including economic development. The proposed project must provide public benefit in one or more of the following areas: enhancement of mobility and safety; promotion of economic development; or increase in the quality of life and general welfare of the public.

Gas Tax

In 2017, the SC General Assembly passed its first gas tax increase in 30 years, which will raise the gas tax by 2 cents per year until 2024. Revenues from that increase will be augment SCDOT's resurfacing efforts and work to improve structurally deficient bridges, improve highway safety, and widen interstates. In Horry County, these funds will be directed to road safety improvements along Highway 9, 701, 90, and 22. It will also include bridge improvements along Alma Rd, Broadway, Brunson Spring Rd, Good Luck Rd, Hwy 134, Hwy 472, Hwy 548, Louisville Rd, and Oak St Extension.

LOCAL FUNDS

The **Horry County Transportation Committee (CTC)** will manage the remaining gas tax funds to ensure that local transportation improvements and maintenance is being prioritized locally. The CTC is composed of 11 members appointed by the Horry County Legislative Delegation. The members of the CTC are appointed by Council District; therefore, represent all areas of the County.

C Funds come from 2.66-cents per gallon of the state gasoline tax distributed to each of the 46 counties based on population, land area, and rural road mileage. By law, counties must spend at least 25% of their C funds on the state highway system for construction, improvements and maintenance. CTC reserves the right to select all roads and/or bridges to be funded. The goal of the CTC will be to cooperate with the SCDOT in maintaining and resurfacing existing secondary roads in Horry County and to hard surface as many unpaved

roads as practical. Consideration will be given to roads serving schools, industries and businesses, roads used for school bus routes, bridges, sidewalks, and the necessary drainage for these projects. Projects will be prioritized based upon a rating sheet prepared in cooperation with the SCDOT, Horry County Engineer's Office and after all pertinent information has been reviewed by the Horry County CTC.

Beginning July 1, 2018 the CTCs portion will increase .3325 -cents per gallon through 2021, when the total will equal 3.99 -cents per gallon. This increase must be used exclusively for repairs, maintenance and improvements to the state highway system. The Donor Bonus allocation goes to counties which contribute more to the C fund than they receive. New legislation increases that total statewide allocation from $9.5 million to $17 million. After that amount has been divided among the donor counties, SCDOT is to then transfer an additional $3.5 million to be divided among donor counties within three-years. Horry County CTC received $3.6 million plus in FY2017-18 and also received additional Donor Bonus monies.

RIDE Program

Horry County has already opted to create a local sales tax to support transportation projects, known as the RIDE Program. The County is now in its third rendition of the program, which has been effective in creating new connections and widening existing roadways. The projects within RIDE 3 were defined through the voting process and cannot vary from those set forth in the adopted resolution to approve the sales tax. In 2025, Horry County will have the ability to consider a new sales tax referendum, if warranted and supported by the public.

Horry County Road Maintenance Fee

Horry County collects $50 on every vehicle registered within the County as a road maintenance fee. This currently adds up to just over $15 million a year. The funds are used for paving, resurfacing, maintenance and improving the County's transportation system. It can also be used to support public transportation.

OTHER FUNDING MECHANISMS

Road improvements can also be privately funded through a number of other mechanisms, such as Impact Fees, Tax Increment Financing, and Development Agreements. In order to pursue such efforts, a development project would have to trigger the need for such improvements and can only fund the equitable portion of transportation improvements related to a development. While these mechanisms are appropriate for arterial, collector, and subcollector road improvements and installation of multi-modal capital improvements, it is not appropriate for major road projects.

The development of expensive improvements, like the construction of new highways and interstates, can be funded by a number of the previously mentioned sources; however, new road construction will be competing for the same limited funds available for road improvements and maintenance. The use of toll roads to fund major projects may be an option to consider if some of the significant road projects in the County are to get past the planning stage and move to construction.

CONCLUSION

In recent years, planners and community leaders across the country have observed increased public interest in reversing the trend of urban sprawl and its consequences. Their efforts largely are motivated by the impacts of suburban development patterns: consumption of sensitive land for development, costly expansion of public infrastructure, and increasing traffic congestion. Throughout Horry County, the distance between complementary land uses (e.g., home and work, home and school, or home and shopping) and a lack of overall street connectivity leads to unintended consequences for the regional transportation system — increased vehicle miles traveled and energy consumption, longer commute times, increase in cost of doing business, increased air pollution, heightened infrastructure and public service costs, increased emergency response times, and impacts to mental and physical health of our residents. Unintended consequences to rapid growth will result, if changes are not made to better integrate land use, urban form, and transportation decision-making. A complete transportation system will not only address roadway needs, but offer a variety of mode choices, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, public transportation, railroad and airplanes. The County should continue to develop a consistent criteria for evaluating new development and its impact on the transportation network.