

Introduction

Purpose of Chapter

This chapter summarizes the Goals and Objectives of the Long Range Plan; highlights the planning process and key recommendations; and presents an implementation or action plan to pursue.

Goals and Objectives

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update began in the fall of 2012 with particular emphasis on public outreach and stakeholder involvement. Through a series of public meetings, workshops and RFATS committee discussions, guiding Goals and Objectives were developed and endorsed for the Plan update.

Overall Goal:

Develop a Plan and strategies that promote an efficient and effective transportation system for all users in the RFATS Study Area

Highway System:

- Enhance mobility by improving existing roads and corridors and street connectivity.
- Maintain and protect the existing transportation system and components and require maximum efficiency and utilization of existing arterials.
- Explore improvements to the street network that will most effectively handle capacity deficiencies.
- Protect existing corridors and reserve future rights-of-way affected by both public and private development.
- Provide a safe transportation system that will focus on reducing crashes at problematic intersections and providing better facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Encourage opportunities to engage freight providers in operational and transportation system upgrade planning.

Congestion Management:

- Continue to support the ongoing Congestion Management Process and fully integrate congestion measures and strategies into the project selection process.
- Continue to improve traffic signalization timing in jurisdictions throughout the Study Area.
- Encourage the incorporation of access management strategies on major roads and corridors and require development to provide adequate internal circulation and connectivity to maximize linkages with other nearby development.

Transportation Alternatives:

- Implement transit plans and strategies that encourage a more comprehensive transit system and accommodate more riders.
- Implement land use policies to encourage transit supportive development patterns along the rapid transit corridor.
- Seek public support and funding sources needed to implement long range transit projects.
- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in planned improvements to roads and corridors.
- Incorporate bicycle facilities/lanes in state and local maintenance and pavement marking projects where feasible.
- Pursue strategies and funding for a coordinated and comprehensive network of sidewalks and bicycle routes throughout the Study Area.
- Require developments to provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities and connections.

Environmental:

- Continue to apply strategies that would improve air quality for the Study Area and result in ozone attainment status.

- Continue to seek ways to promote better integration of land use and transportation planning that will support sustainable growth patterns and maximize the transportation system.
- Encourage more efficient and compact growth in urban areas away from environmentally sensitive areas.
- Minimize environmental impacts of the transportation system with proper planning and preservation techniques of the area's natural features.
- Promote a transportation system that includes equitable options for low income and minority populations.

Public Outreach and Awareness:

- Continue to seek ways to educate and inform the RFATS Study Area citizens about the MPO transportation planning process and goals and encourage their participation.
- Utilize visualization techniques to illustrate and inform the public about transportation projects.
- Educate the public regarding funding needs and resources to finance a long range plan

Summary of Key Points and Recommendations of the Plan

The RFATS Study Area has experienced tremendous population growth over the past 20 years, with a significant growth spurt within the last seven to eight years. Based on population projections through the horizon year 2035, the RFATS Study Area is expected to exceed 200,000 people. This population increase is due in large part to its close proximity to Charlotte.

With population growth comes increased demands on the transportation system. However, funding from the state and federal levels for transportation improvements is limited and very competitive. Consequently, leaders must be very selective in identifying the top cost-effective projects for funding consideration. In addition, policy makers will need to focus more attention on enhancing the existing transportation network, reducing congestion, and encouraging mass transit opportunities. The goals and objectives of the

Plan highlight the need for transportation leaders as well as citizens of the RFATS Study Area to come together to support the Plan and funding resources which can address the regional transportation infrastructure needs. The One Cents Sales Tax initiative, Pennies for Progress, will continue to be a critical funding source for transportation improvements.

Addressing and implementing multimodal improvements will be an important step in achieving the Plan's goals and objectives. Additional interaction with and assessment of needs for the freight transportation users is anticipated. Incorporating bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in transportation facility planning and implementation was a dominant theme at public meetings. A regional assessment and inventory of existing walking and cycling facilities would be a starting point that could lead to a regional system.

With the expected population growth of the RFATS Study Area, transportation and land use coordination planning is paramount. Thoroughfare and sub-area collector road plans would help preserve new road corridors and ensure connectivity between existing and new developments. Access management standards along high profile corridors and congested areas could promote efficiency of the highway system.

To implement the LRTP, RFATS must work proactively with stakeholders. These include:

- SCDOT
- FHWA
- FTA
- EPA
- DHEC
- RFATS Communities
- Citizens, Businesses
- Technical Resource Agencies
- SC Legislative Representatives
- Neighboring Communities in Charlotte Region

Continuing coordination and information sharing will be critical to fully implement the Plan's goals and objectives.

Action Plan

The following Action Plan identifies key items and/or steps to implement the recommendations of the LRTP.

Public Awareness Actions:

1. Include an Executive Summary as well as the full Plan on RFATS website.
2. Create a user-friendly, visually enhanced brochure of the LRTP for public distribution.
3. Continue to engage the RFATS Citizen's Advisory Committee in LRTP implementation activities.
4. Share LRTP with other MPOs in the Charlotte region.

Policy Initiative Actions:

1. Work with local community leaders and businesses to continue the One Cent Sales Tax Program for transportation improvements.
2. Take a leadership role in encouraging and promoting transit opportunities in the Study Area.
3. Proactively support bicycle and pedestrian provisions with highway facility improvements. Consider supporting a Complete Streets policy that establishes the need to accommodate a well-balanced transportation system, including cyclists, pedestrians as well as vehicles.
4. Work with federal, state and local partners to address air quality issues and ensure attainment status by 2010. Develop and support policies which limit or reduce ground-level ozone pollution in the Study Area.

Highway System Actions:

1. Prepare a thoroughfare plan and targeted sub-area collector road plans identified in the Congestion Management Study to promote connectivity and efficiency of the highway network.
2. Implement access management measures and design that help protect mobility of high profile corridors.

3. Pursue funding from SCDOT for key safety improvement at identified intersections. RFATS should safety projects (such as education and/or data analysis projects) as well as physical construction schemes.
4. RFATS and SCDOT should joint further develop RFATS-specific regional based safety strategies tied to specific crash locations in the RFATS Study Area. This effort should be developed in cooperation with all the local jurisdictions within RFATS. The strategies should also document and prioritize safety strategies for projected high crash locations within the RFATS Study Area.
5. Vigorously pursue all public funding sources to complete the Project List included in the Highway Element.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations Actions:

1. Support bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for state and One Cents Sales Tax road projects.
2. Pursue state, local and private funding to complete priority segments of the Carolina Thread Trail in York County.
3. Pursue Safe Routes to Schools funding for cycling and walking facilities with close proximity to public schools.
4. Prepare a regional trail map reflecting trail systems in all RFATS communities.
5. Support Bicycle Friendly Community status for Rock Hill.

Congestion Management Actions:

1. Prepare the next level of the Congestion Management Process including monitoring procedures and measures of effectiveness for the Congestion Management Network.
2. Review findings and recommendations of the Charlotte Region Managed Lanes Study and its implications for the I-77 corridor in York County.

Freight Movement Actions:

1. Prepare a comprehensive Freight Study. This would help understand the specific needs of freight shippers and receivers, as well as how the RFATS Study Area could benefit from Charlotte's existing and planned intermodal facilities. It would also include the congestion impacts of freight and corridor designated truck routes.

Public Transportation Actions:

1. Actively promote transit-supportive land use and site development within the RFATS communities, particularly along the US 21 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor.
2. Implement the action plan and phasing strategy, including funding proposals, for the US 21 BRT corridor.
3. Develop a marketing plan and tools to promote local funding support for the BRT.
4. Consider expansion of local public transportation service and facilities.