

Introduction

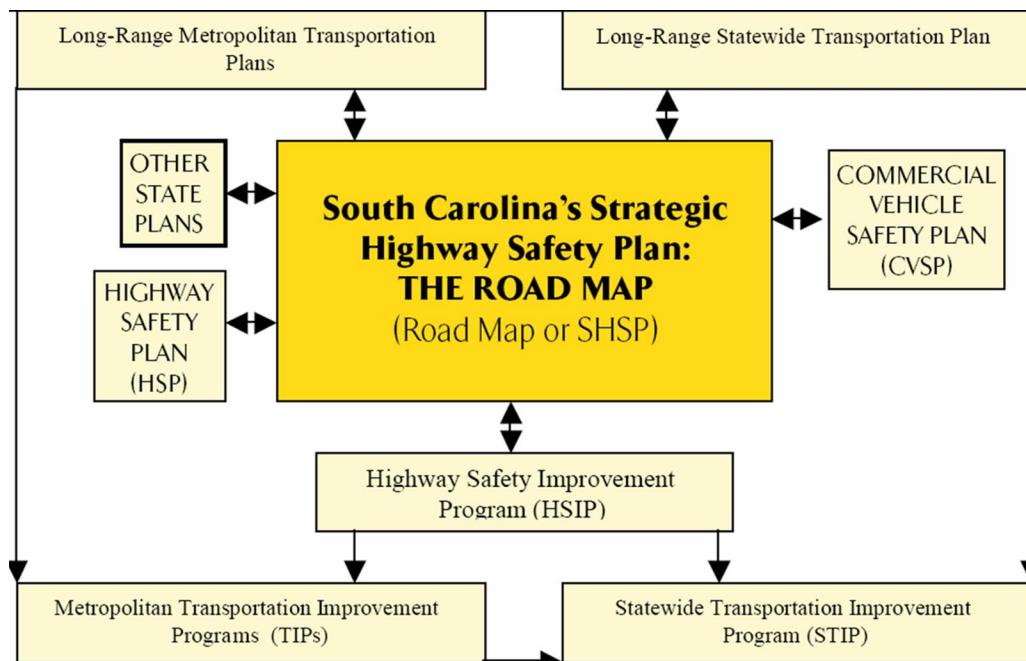
Purpose of Chapter

This chapter provides the safety element of the RFATS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). It describes the relationship of the RFATS LRTP to the South Carolina Department of Transportation's (SCDOT's) statewide safety plan, *The Road Map to Safety*.

Relevance to the Transportation System and the Plan

Federal law requires safety to be part of the RFATS transportation planning process. The key planning process for highway safety in the RFATS Study Area has been the development of the statewide highway safety plan. This was published in 2008 under the title *South Carolina's Strategic Highway Safety Plan: The Roadmap to Safety*. As **Figure 5.1** shows, the statewide highway safety plan is intended to feed into a range of other plans, including this LRTP.

Figure 5.1 - Relationship between the Highway Safety Plan and Other Plans



Source: *South Carolina's Strategic Highway Safety Plan: The Roadmap to Safety* (2008)

Existing Conditions and Trends

National Conditions and Trends

SAFETEA-LU established a new core Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) which is carried forward in the new MAP-21 legislation. The program is aimed at making significant progress in reducing highway fatalities. It includes a near-doubling of the funds available for infrastructure safety, and it requires strategic highway safety planning, focusing on results. The Federal legislation raised the status of highway safety by establishing HSIP as a core program tied to strategic safety planning and performance. Other programs target specific areas of concern, such as work zones, older drivers, and pedestrians, including children walking to school.

Like SAFETEA-LU, MAP-21 also broadens the planning for safety to include management and operational considerations on a regional basis. This requires more coordination with enforcement and other measures as documented in this plan.

Statewide Conditions and Trends

South Carolina's Strategic Highway Safety Plan: The Roadmap to Safety recognized that South Carolina had one of the highest traffic fatality rates in the nation, and asserted that the current number of deaths and injuries is unacceptable. The plan was developed through a cooperative approach between SCDOT and a range of partners, but under Federal law SCDOT leads the statewide implementation effort. Federal law requires this LRTP to include a safety element that incorporates or summarizes the priorities, goals, counter-measures, and/or projects for the RFATS area that are included in the statewide plan.

RFATS fully endorses the statewide plan and looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with SCDOT and partners to make progress with implementation. The following section summarizes the key elements in the statewide plan.

- **Fatality Reduction Goal:** reduce the number of traffic crash fatalities by 25%
- **Injury Reduction Goal:** to reduce the number of traffic crash injuries experienced by 3% annually.
- **Safety Resources Goal:** to endorse and support, as appropriate, efforts to increase funding for state and local traffic law enforcement safety improvements to highways, and enhanced Emergency Medical Service (EMS) and first-responder capabilities.

To reach the fatality reduction goal, eight key strategies were identified:

- Collaborating with other agencies to maintain support, and improve existing safety and licensing legislation.
- Effectively deterring, identifying, arresting, and adjudicating alcohol and other drug impaired drivers and pedestrians.
- Expanding, improving, and maintaining roadway clear zones and visibility features (i.e. markings, signs, lighting, etc.).
- Expanding the installation of shoulder, edgeline, and centerline rumble strips and protective barriers, and the use of wider, paved shoulders.
- Improving communications strategies.
- Improving current data systems and analysis methods.
- Increasing enforcement and public information and education on traffic safety issues.
- Increasing occupant restraint usage.

These strategies incorporate the four “E”s of safety:

- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Education
- And Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

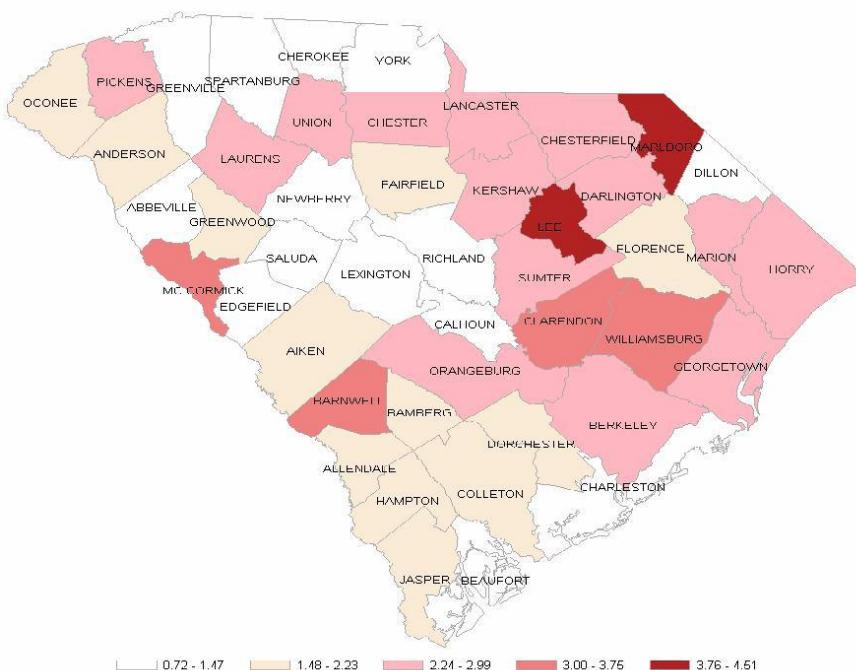
The highway safety plan does not include specific projects. Instead, each agency accounts for safety when developing its own projects. RFATS will continue to incorporate safety in its transportation planning process with the intent to address regional safety issues staying consistent with—and reflecting the goals and objectives of—the statewide strategic highway safety plan.

Regional Conditions and Trends

Crash rate data currently are only available at the county level. Data for York and Lancaster County are therefore the best representation of conditions within the RFATS study area. York and Lancaster County have a relatively good safety record compared to other counties in South Carolina. **Figure 5.** and

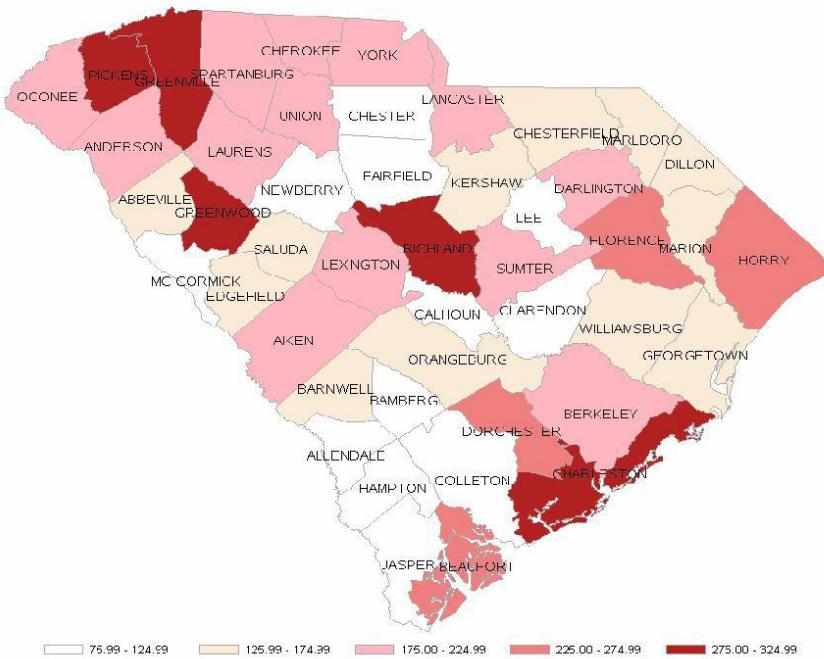
Figure 5. illustrate crash statistics for each county in the state. The traffic fatality rate in York County is among the lowest in the state, indicating that traffic collisions are, on average, less severe than in most other areas of South Carolina. Lancaster County falls somewhere in the middle for both collisions and fatalities compared to the other counties in the state.

Figure 5.2 - Traffic Fatalities per 100,000,000 VMT



Source: *South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book, 2009 edition*

Figure 5.3 - Traffic Collisions per 100,000,000 VMT



Source: *South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book, 2009 edition*

Stakeholder Input

The safety of cyclists and pedestrians was a common concern raised by stakeholders during the public involvement process for the LRTP. Additional stakeholder concerns and comments arose during the development of the statewide plan, and were reflected in that plan.

Summary and Recommendations

Summary of Key Points

- The statewide highway safety plan is the key framework for highway safety.
- RFATS supports the plan and will continue to work with partners to make progress with implementation, by taking account of the goals and key strategies in its planning processes.
- The crash record in the RFATS Study Area is relatively good, in comparison to other parts of South Carolina.

Recommendations

- RFATS should review its potential contribution to the eight key strategies in the statewide highway safety plan, in the context of specific needs and opportunities in the RFATS Study Area. This could lead to consideration of potential non-traditional safety projects (such as education and/or data analysis projects) as well as physical construction schemes.
- RFATS and SCDOT should jointly develop RFATS-specific regionally-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.
- RFATS and its member jurisdictions should use the information described above to identify high priority spot-safety projects. Local transportation projects should consider and respond to these identified safety concerns through enhanced designs that mitigate or reduce the safety conflict. Furthermore, it is recommended that RFATS and local jurisdictions consider allocating a dedicated funding source or a portion of existing funding for the expressed purpose of implementing local safety improvements.
- Finally, in accordance with the intent of MAP-21, RFATS should consider safety as a distinct performance measure during project evaluation and prioritization.