

Introduction

Balancing the transportation needs of a growing region requires a firm understanding of what has been accomplished in the past, what the current conditions are, and what needs to be achieved in the future. With an agreed-upon vision in mind, citizens and decision-makers can unite in the process of prioritization to overcome the difficulty of completing projects that rely on increasingly scarce funds. This financially constrained transportation plan recognizes that need for a vision and embodies the values of a multi-level partnership rooted in local policy, public involvement, and state and federal cooperation.

The 2030 *GPATS Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP) respects the history and heritage of the region by presenting an ambitious, forward-thinking framework for the area’s future. History has shown that true choice in transportation is important to be able to maintain and enhance a community’s quality of life. This plan integrates local and regional planning initiatives so that the transportation system of the future respects community vision, local corridor context, and environmental goals.

Updating the Long Range Transportation Plan

Federal regulations require the region’s LRTP be updated every 5 years to reflect changing needs and priorities. The Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (GPATS MPO) existing LRTP was last revised December 2002. This updated plan addresses the area’s transportation needs through 2030, a 24-year period. To be successful, the LRTP must balance economic development goals and strategies with community investments. This balancing act involves cooperation at local, regional, state, and federal levels. The areas comprising the GPATS study area are shown in **Figures 2.1A-2.1D**. Numerous stakeholders have participated in this update, including:

- GPATS MPO
- Cities of Easley, Fountain Inn, Greenville, Greer, Mauldin, Simpsonville, and Travelers Rest
- Towns of Liberty and Pickens
- Anderson, Greenville, Laurens, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties
- Various local, regional, state, and federal agencies, including the Greenville Transit Authority (GTA), the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Census, Demographics, and Traveling Trends

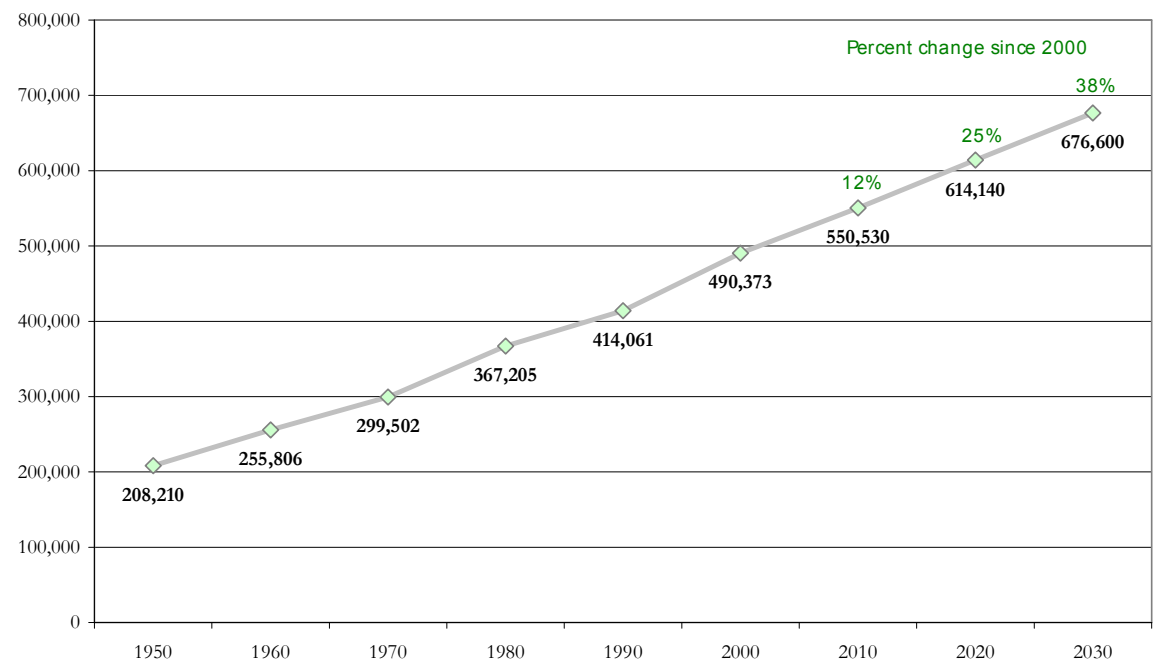
The GPATS region has witnessed steady growth since the state began to sell former Native American lands to recover from the American Revolution. Growth intensified following World War II, and between 1970 and 2000, the population of Greenville and Pickens Counties increased by more than 60%. By 2030, the two counties are expected to increase by an additional 38%. This trend is shown in **Figure 2.2**.

The continued growth of the GPATS area has attracted new cultural, recreational, and economic resources to the area. The growth also poses challenges such as increased traffic congestion, pollution, and loss of open space, and it influences commuting patterns throughout the region. As the economy of the area converted from agriculture to manufacturing, Greenville became the economic hub of the region. **Table 2.1** shows that Greenville County attracts a large percentage of work from counties throughout the region. In fact, 29% of the workers residing in Pickens County and 26% of workers in Laurens County are employed in Greenville County.

Table 2.1 – Employee Travel Flows		
From	To	Percent
Greenville	Greenville	87.3%
Anderson	Greenville	18.1%
	Anderson	68.5%
Laurens	Greenville	26.2%
	Laurens	56.2%
Pickens	Greenville	29.0%
	Pickens	55.5%
Spartanburg	Greenville	12.5%
	Spartanburg	81.6%

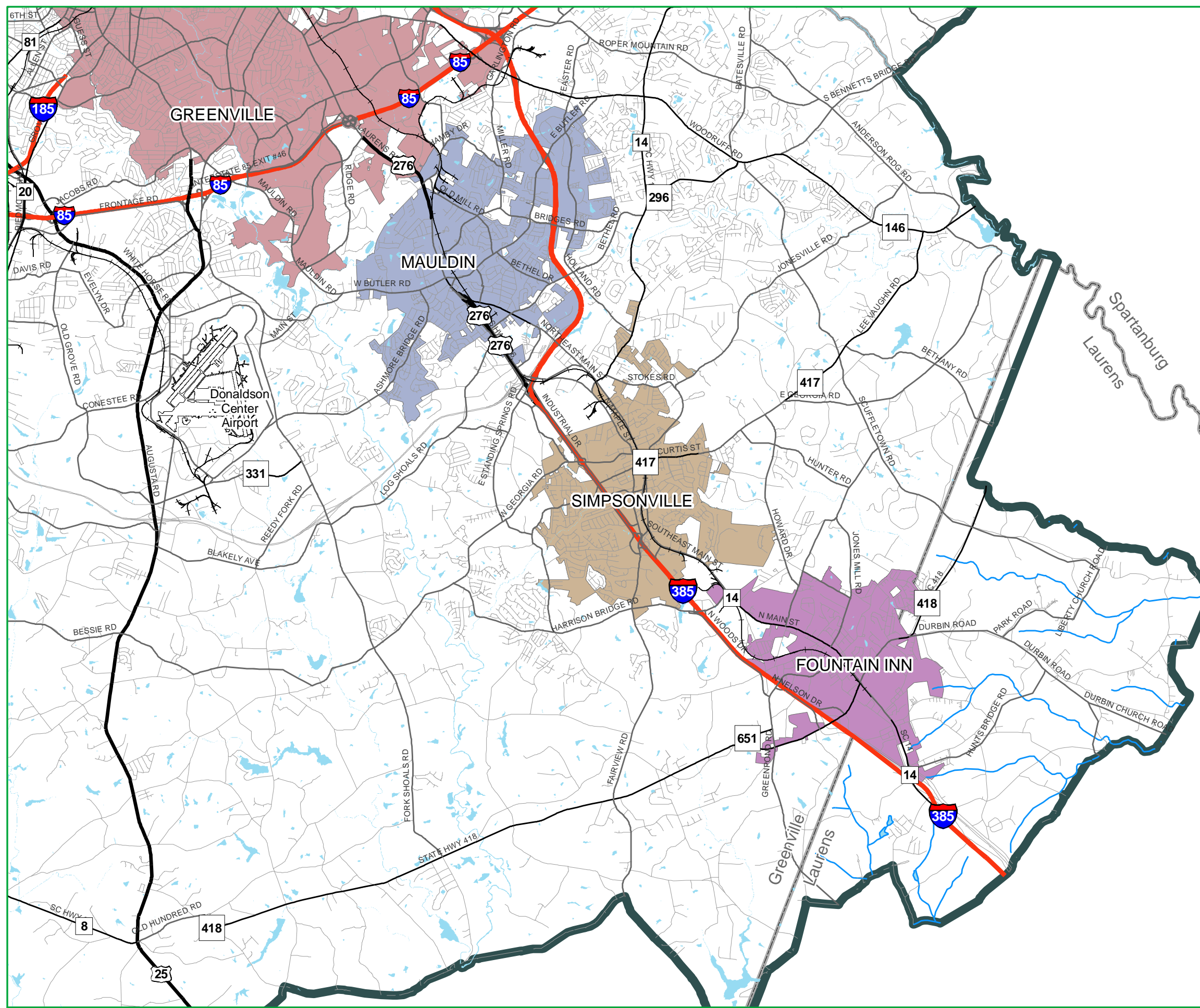
Source: Missouri Census Data Center

Figure 2.2 Population Trends and Projections
Greenville and Pickens Counties



Source: South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, Health and Demographics Division

Figure 2.1A
Study Area



- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Fountain Inn | Study Area |
| Greenville | Counties |
| Greer | Bodies of Water |
| Mauldin | Railroad |
| Simpsonville | Interstate |
| Travelers Rest | US Route |
| Easley | State Route |
| Liberty | Local Street |
| Pickens | |

Vicinity Map

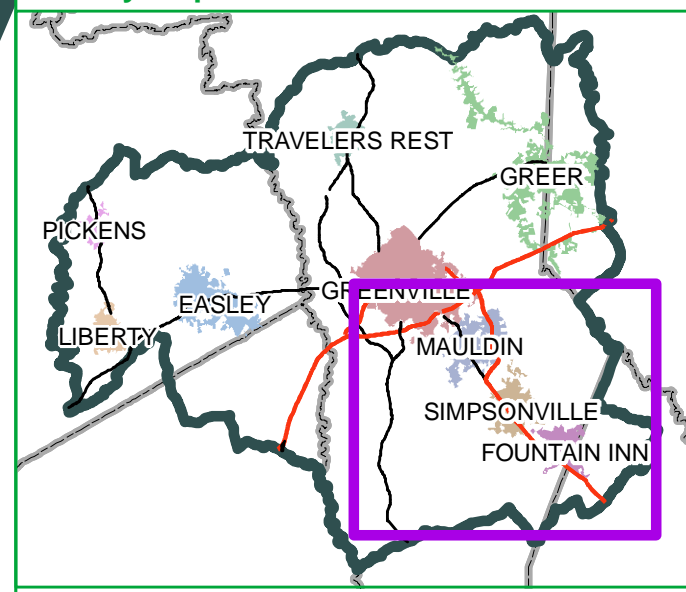


Figure 2.1B

Study Area

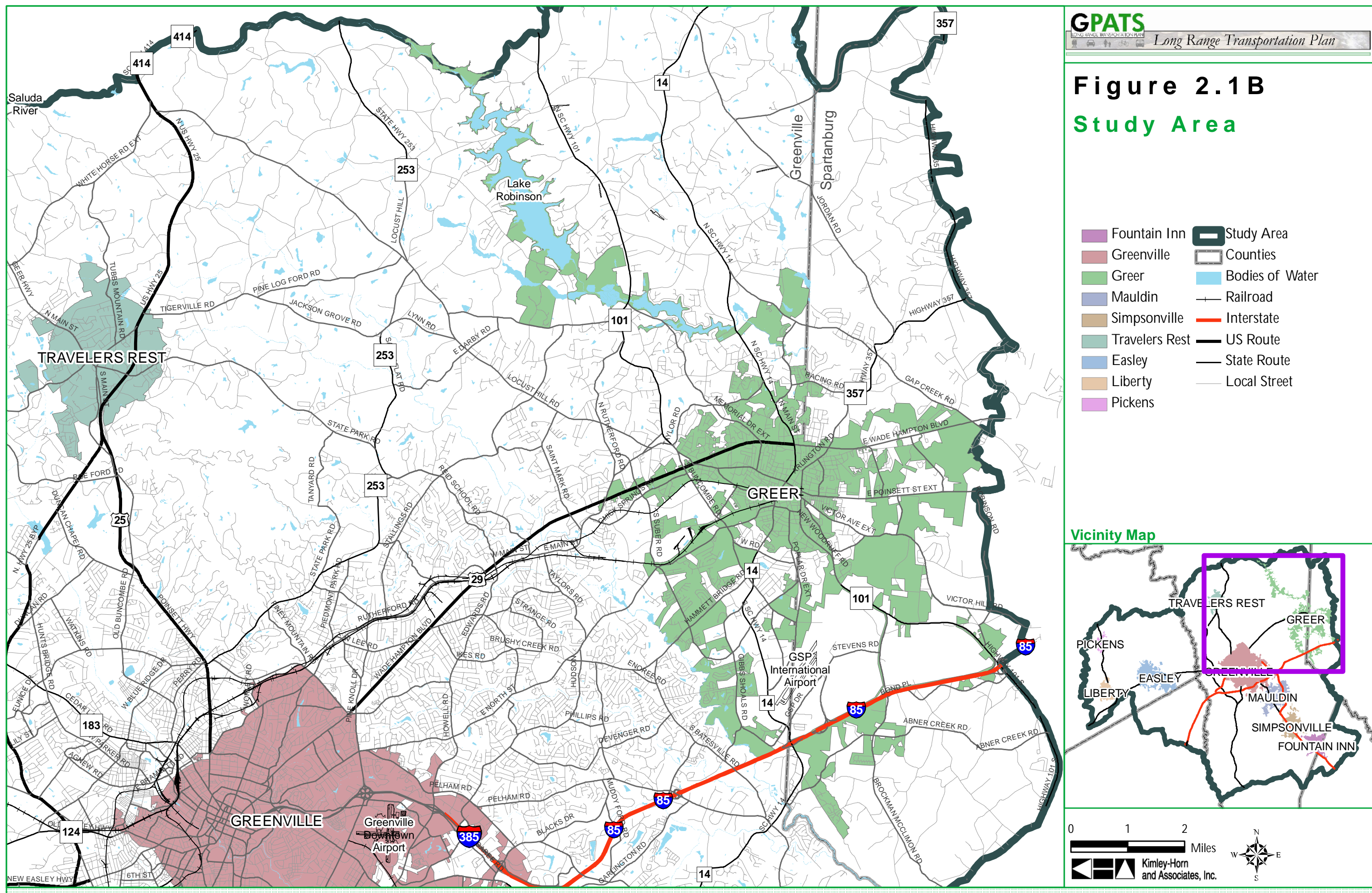


Figure 2.1C
Study Area

- Fountain Inn

Greenville

Greer

Mauldin

Simpsonville

Travelers Rest

Easley

Liberty

Pickens

Study Area

Counties

Bodies of Water

Railroad

Interstate

US Route

State Route

Local Street

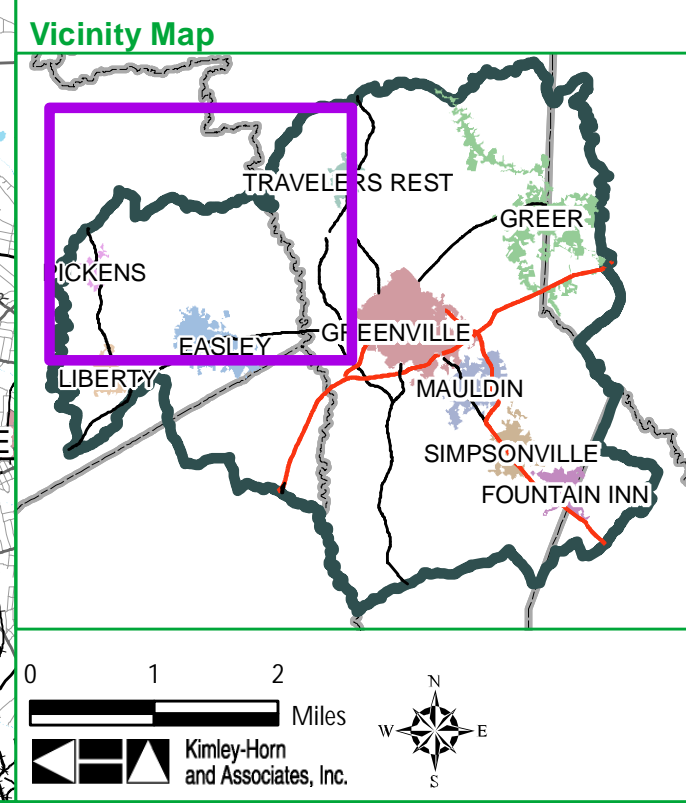
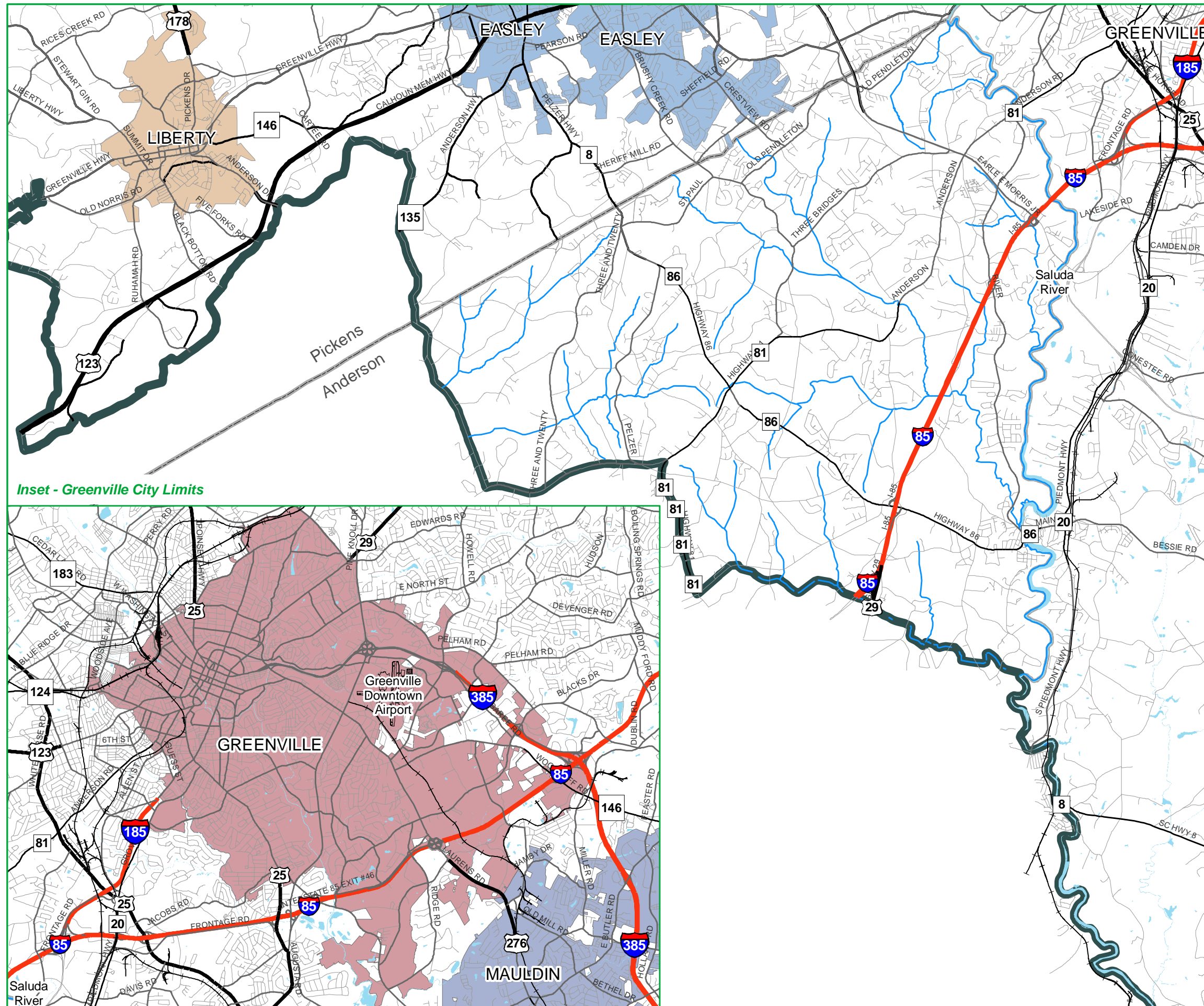
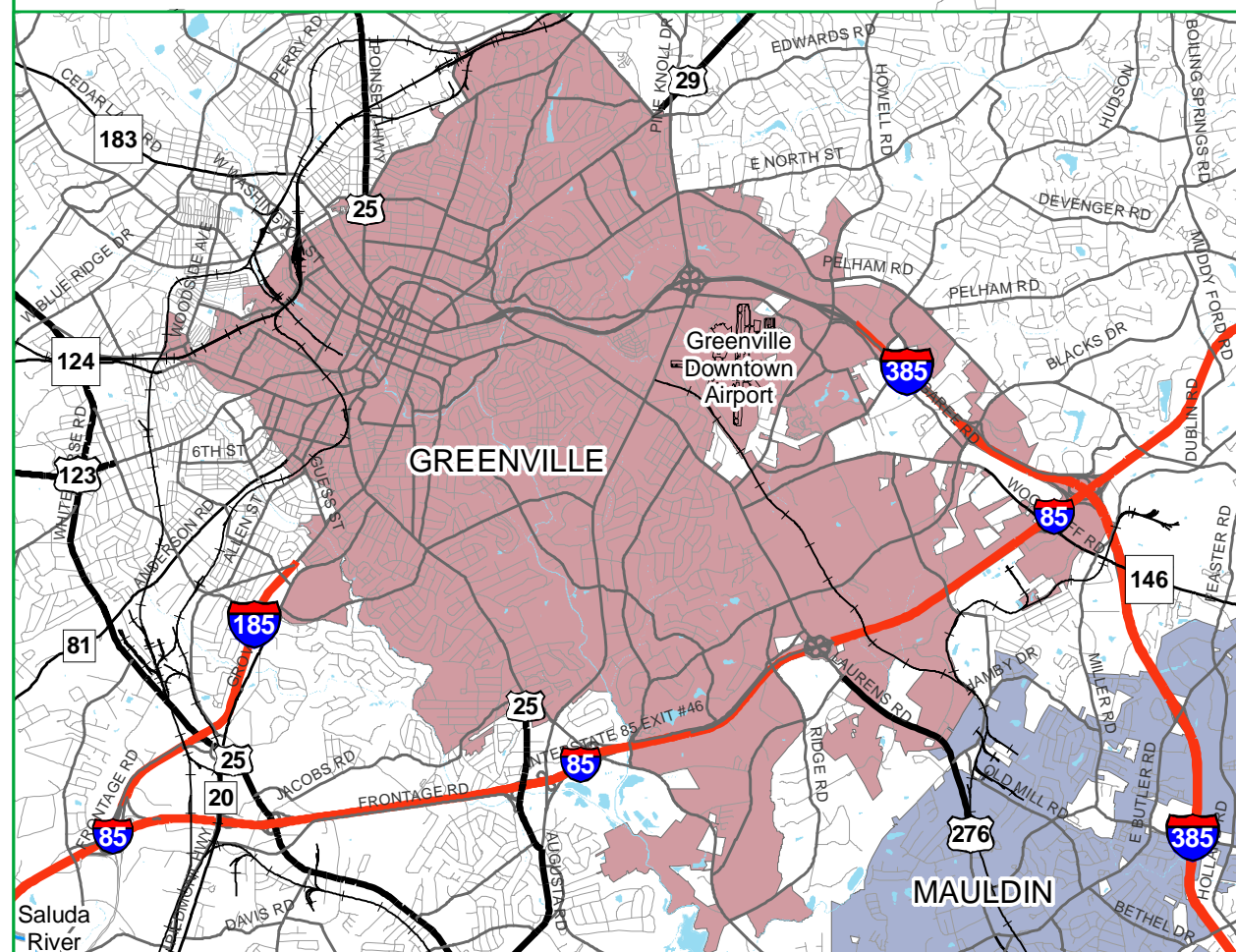


Figure 2.1D
Study Area

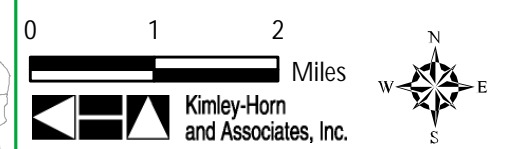
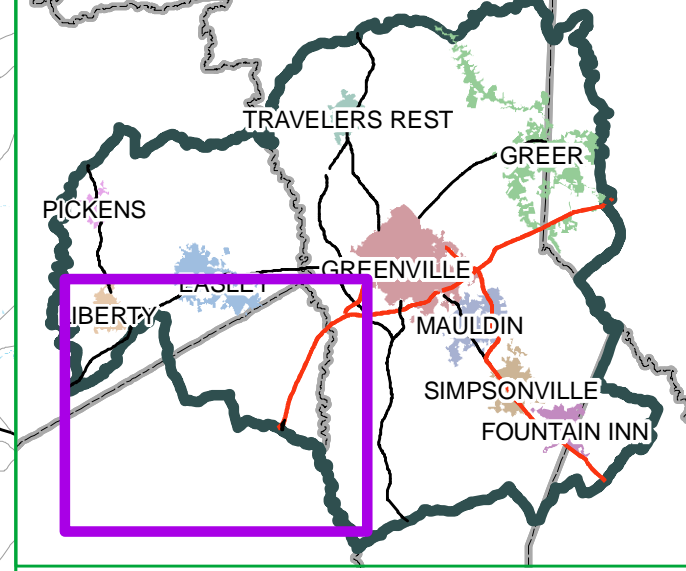


Inset - Greenville City Limits



- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Fountain Inn | Study Area |
| Greenville | Counties |
| Greer | Bodies of Water |
| Mauldin | Railroad |
| Simpsonville | Interstate |
| Travelers Rest | US Route |
| Easley | State Route |
| Liberty | Local Street |
| Pickens | |

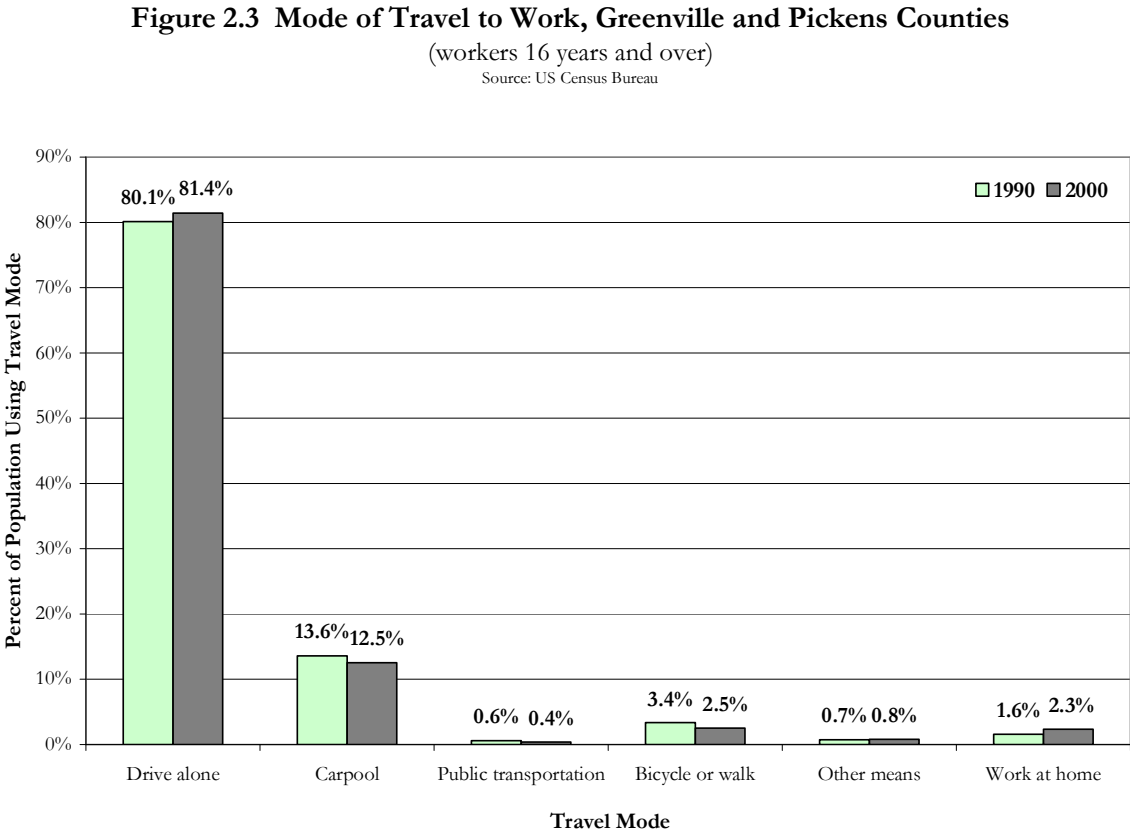
Vicinity Map



The region’s workforce has become more dependent on personal transportation, and average commute times have increased. As shown in **Figure 2.3**, between 1990 and 2000 the share of commuters traveling alone increased while carpooling, public transportation, and bicycling and walking declined. In Pickens County, driving alone increased 3% as carpooling and bicycling or walking declined at a similar rate. Between 1990 and 2000, commute times in Greenville and Pickens Counties have increased 19.3% and 22.9%, respectively (shown in **Figure 2.4**). These figures are similar to the totals for the five counties that comprise the GPATS study area.

Throughout the region, the number of trips and the length of those trips continue to increase. In addition, the number of vehicles per household is increasing even as large groups of the population lack access to a vehicle. A multimodal transportation system provides choice for users and meets the needs of a regional population.

The GPATS LRTP identifies general and specific transportation system improvement recommendations and strategies to help accommodate growth in travel demand. The plan specifies ways for the region to maintain the quality of life its citizens value even as the mobility and accessibility of goods and people are improved. The update acknowledges the need for true choice in transportation, a system that supports not only automobiles, but also pedestrians, bicyclists, transit patrons, and freight.



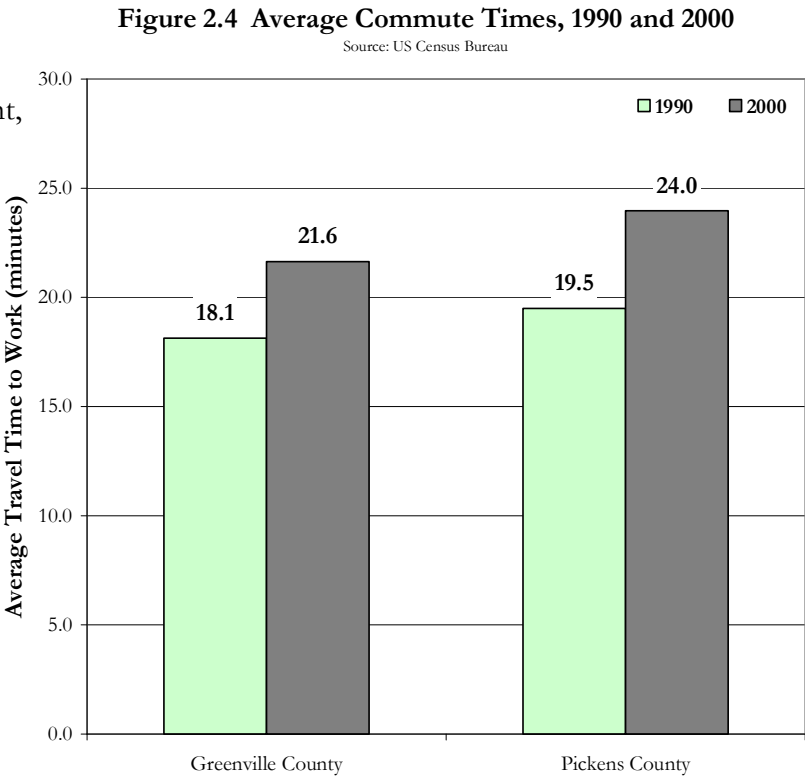
Central to the development of transportation alternatives is the relationship between local transportation networks, planned land use, and natural, historic, and economic resources. The 2030 update emphasizes community involvement, shared resources, and a multi-disciplined approach to meet the vision and objectives detailed in the plan. But a grand vision and comprehensive plan is useless if it is not implemented. To avoid such a circumstance, the *GPATS Long Range Transportation Plan* dedicates multiple chapters to financial and implementation strategies. The highest priority projects identified in the LRTP will move into the state’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a necessary step for funding and completion.

Public Involvement

Since its inception in 1970, the metropolitan planning process has established a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive planning framework for making transportation investment decisions. While program oversight responsibilities are shared by FHWA and FTA, officials at the local level must consider how projects will address eight broad areas during the planning process:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

The *GPATS Long Range Transportation Plan* is based on these principles, supported by data, and built around an inclusive public involvement process. A key component of the public involvement process was the early identification of groups likely to be most impacted by the *Plan*, as well as the exchange of information, ideas, and priorities. Team members took steps to make sure the technical language could be easily understood. To reach a common vision, the community outreach efforts involved both formal and informal actions such as the public workshops, small group meetings, stakeholder interviews, and responses to citizen phone calls and emails described below.



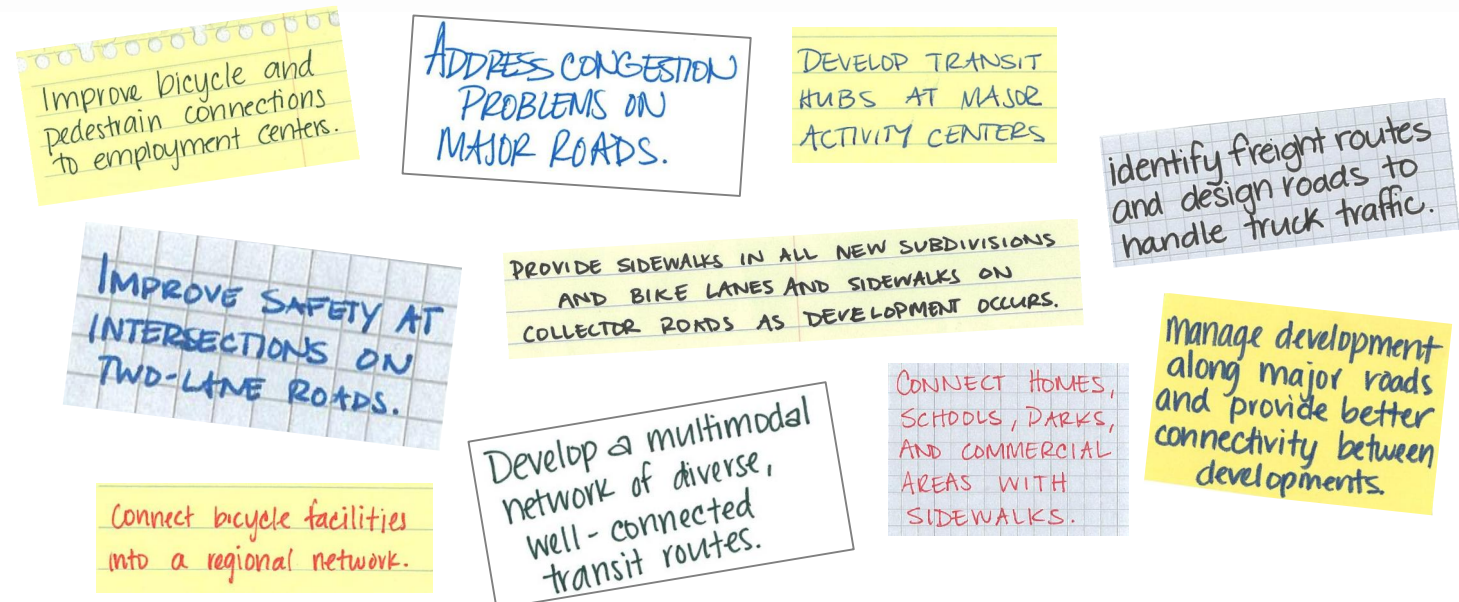
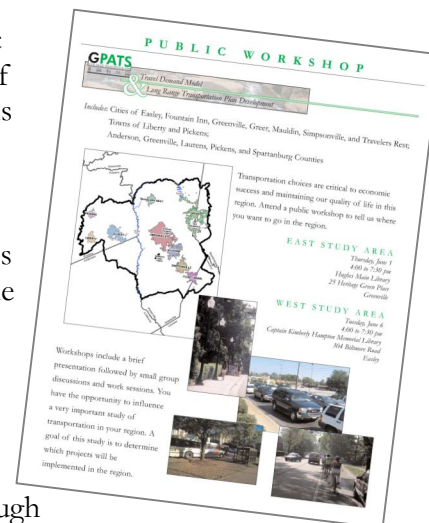
Transportation Plan Advisory Committee

The Transportation Plan Advisory Committee (TPAC) formed as a unique citizen subcommittee to serve in an advisory role during the development of the plan. The TPAC began meeting monthly in March 2006 and participated in visioning exercises, information feedback, and drafting vision statements. The TPAC also served as a sounding board for ideas generated by the project team and planning staff.

At the first meetings, the group outlined several issues that need to be resolved in order to maintain the region's high quality of life. These issues included improving traffic congestion by creating a network of interconnected streets, increasing the mode choices available to travelers, coordinating land use and transportation, and recognizing transportation's role in economic development. Other issues included equity, safety, and environmental concerns.

Public Workshops

An important role of the TPAC was to ensure the public workshops were attended by a large and diverse group of citizens. The project team and TPAC recognized citizens have an intimate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of an area's transportation system. This knowledge provides information at a variety of scales, from the level of intersections all the way to the region as a whole. Public workshops were held on June 1 and June 6, 2006 to allow members of the community to convey their concerns and express their priorities for the region's transportation system. After an overview presentation and group exercises, participants gathered around maps to identify specific concerns and recommendations. Several themes emerged during through this inclusive process. These themes touched on all elements of the long-range transportation plan and are identified in the notes shown to the right.



An interim round of five public forums occurred in February 2007, at which staff gave a short presentation and answered questions in an open house format. The open house format centered around three stations – highways, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian. The results of the second round of workshops further validated the themes shown above. Other comments included the following.

- Highway Needs:
 - Improve network of collector streets
 - Manage better congestion resulting from highway construction
- Transit Needs:
 - Change the perception that public transit is only for those with low incomes
 - Provide more funding for Greenville Transit Authority
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs:
 - Require sidewalks in all new subdivisions
 - Construct more greenways and bikeways

The community reconvened on August 21, 2007 to provide feedback on the findings and recommendations at a public workshop. The feedback received during this workshop allowed the project team to make final changes to the recommendations prior to the completion of the draft report. The draft GPATS Long Range Transportation Plan was presented August 21, 2007 at Carolina First Center in Greenville, followed by a 30-day public review process.



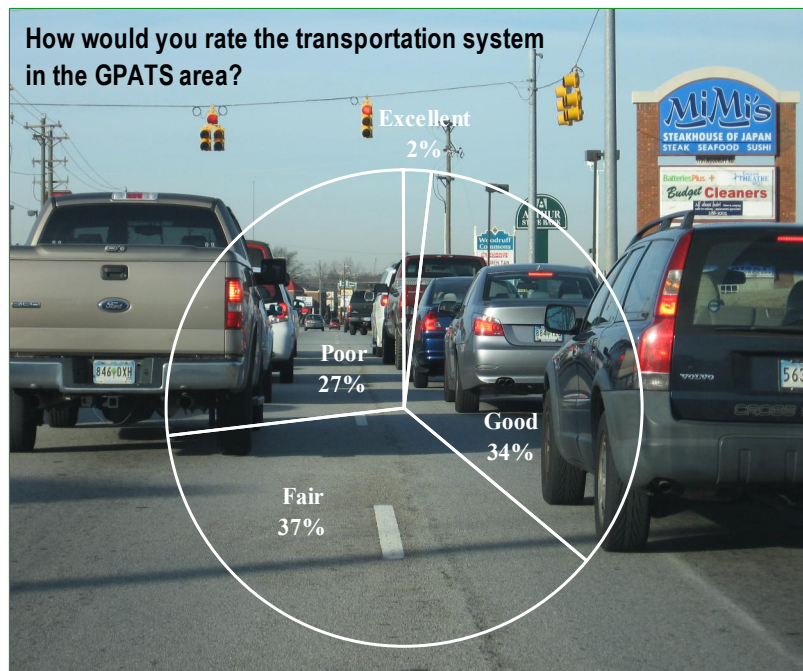
Public Survey

A public survey made available public workshops and through the County’s planning department allowed the general public to comment on priorities for future transportation improvements and identify preferred funding sources. The 20-question survey included general questions regarding likes and dislikes in the Greenville regions, questions specific to individual elements of the LRTP, and questions designed to challenge respondents to make choices related to transportation priorities and funding.

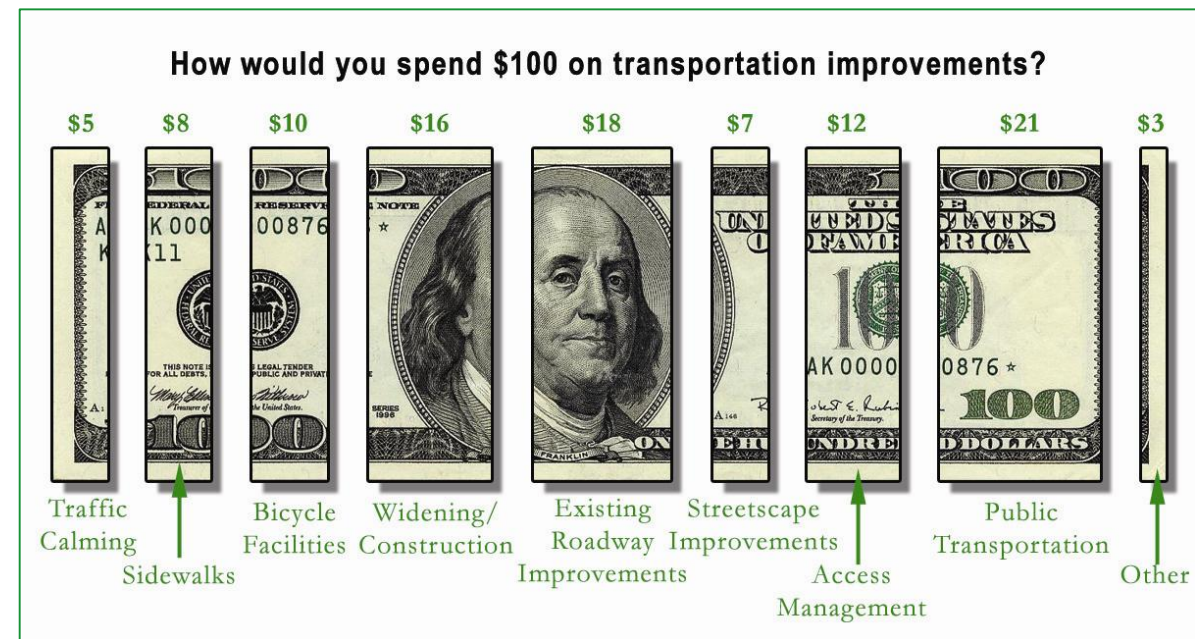
In general, respondents expressed a desire for a multimodal transportation system. This sentiment echoed the themes that emerged from other public involvement vehicles such as the TPAC, stakeholder interviews, and public workshops. They also recognized that a congestion problem exists within the region, Woodruff Road was cited most often as a road with congestion problems.

Two broad questions asked respondents to rate the transportation system and to divide \$100 among a series of transportation improvements. As the pie chart shows, most respondents rated the system as “fair” or “good.” While, these results indicate residents recognize some favorable aspects of the transportation system,

the 27% that rated the system as poor indicates the potential to improve the transportation system by implementing the recommendations of the *GPATS Long Range Transportation Plan*.

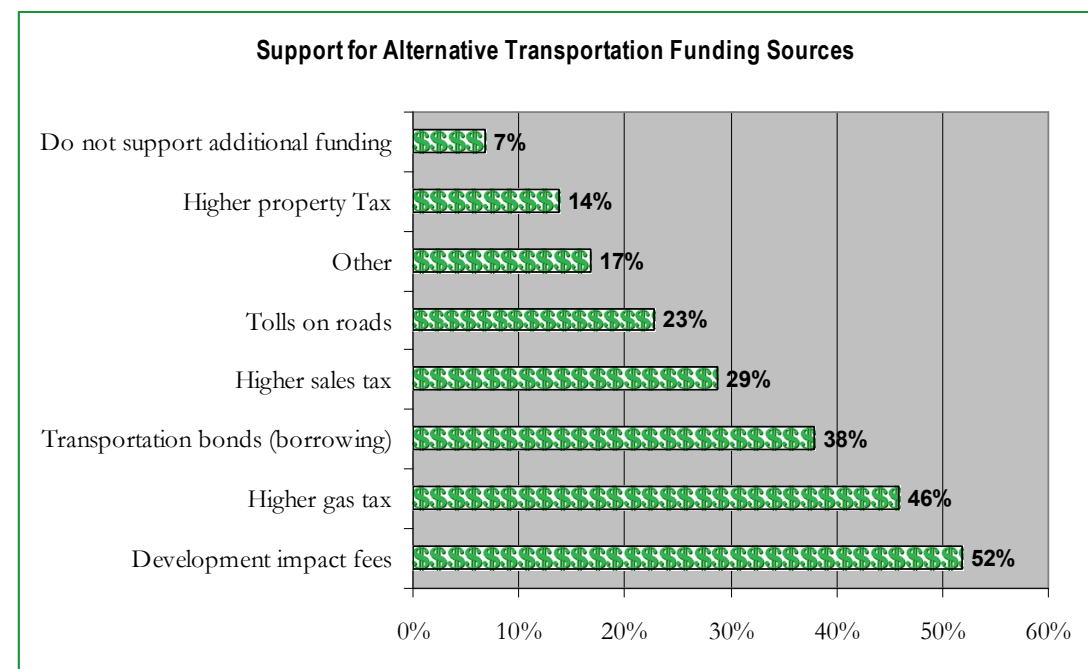


When forced to make funding decisions to improve the transportation network, respondents could choose to spend all the money on one category or distribute it among several categories. As shown in the diagram below, most money was allocated to improving existing roadways, whether through existing roadway improvements, streetscape improvements, or access management strategies. However, more money was allocated to public transportation than any other category. This fact reveals the importance of a flexible, multimodal transportation system that provides choice to all users.



If additional funding is required to pay for transportation improvements, development impact fees had the highest percentage of support, with 52 percent of respondents in favor of instituting development impact fees to pay for transportation improvements. A surprising amount of support (46 percent) surfaced for raising the gas tax, perhaps due in part to the presentation’s mention that the state’s gas tax has not been increased, even to adjust for inflation, for almost two decades. Five respondents wrote in their desire to increase vehicle registration fees, perhaps indicating the potential for an even broader level of support if “higher vehicle registration fees” had been listed as one of the default categories from which to choose.

Additional information from the survey is presented in the appropriate element.



Vision

Vision and Objectives

This update to the LRTP attempts to balance the vision and objectives expressed by the TPAC with comments received through the public involvement process. The following goals and objectives were expressed during the public involvement process and guided the development of the transportation plan:

- **Develop a plan that maximizes benefits to the transportation system while minimizing costs involved** – improve existing roads and corridors and implement creative strategies to better manage congestion
- **Develop a smarter, sustainable transportation system** – identify unique challenges within the region and learn from past successes and mistakes
- **Provide viable transportation alternatives to decrease dependence on the automobile, in turn decreasing the demand load on the existing transportation system** – provide a more comprehensive transit system that accommodates more riders and improve and enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network
- **Provide a safe transportation system for all users** – develop safety projects to reduce crashes at high-collision intersections and provide better facilities for pedestrian and bicyclists
- **Recognize the effect growth patterns have on the transportation system and vice versa** – develop strategies to effectively encourage connectivity while discouraging inefficient sprawl development
- **Minimize environmental impacts of the transportation system** – utilize planning tools to preserve areas along streambeds and restore and maintain air quality status for the GPATS area
- **Encourage on-going maintenance and improvement of the existing transportation system**
- **Educate both GPATS area citizens and decision makers about the long range plan process and the funding sources needed to finance long range plan projects**
- **Develop a plan more conducive to developer-financed growth** – recognize the impact of development on the transportation system and require some financial responsibility from the development community

A Transportation Planning Guide

The vision for a cost-effective, efficient, and safe transportation system can become a reality. This plan exists as a vital tool to encourage a smarter, sustainable future transportation system that supports continued economic development throughout the region without harming its natural and social resources. The following chapters constitute the *GPATS Long Range Transportation Plan*:

- Background and History
- Introduction and Vision
- Highway Element – Existing
- Highway Element – Future
- Social and Environmental Screening
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Element
- Public Transit Element
- Freight Element
- Financial Plan
- Implementation Plan