

Catawba Regional COG Rural Transportation Planning Work Program

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025

Draft to be presented to the CRCOG Board on May 18, 2023



**Catawba
Regional**
Council of Governments

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CATAWBA REGION OVERVIEW

Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) is an association of local governments located in North-Central South Carolina. The Catawba Region includes Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York counties. The COG serves as a forum for intergovernmental cooperation and as a central staffing resource for grantsmanship, land use and transportation planning, community and economic development, workforce investment, GIS mapping, information systems, and project management. South Carolina Councils of Governments were formed by state statute in 1967, with specific geographic regions defined by the state legislature in 1971. There are ten Councils of Governments serving local governments throughout South Carolina.

BACKGROUND

In 1998, South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) contracted with the CRCOG and the nine other COGs in the state to coordinate transportation planning assistance for non-urbanized portions of the State. SCDOT involved the COGs to decentralize the transportation planning process and to allow for more local involvement in project identification and development. This partnership between SCDOT and the COGs aids the State in fulfilling the requirements of the federal and state planning process to address the transportation needs of non-metropolitan areas.

RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAM

As the designated planning agency for the Catawba Region, CRCOG is responsible for the maintenance and coordination of transportation plans for the rural/non-urbanized areas of the region, maintenance of financial records for the planning support funds, and prioritizing and forwarding local project recommendations to SCDOT. The eastern portion of York County and the northern part of Lancaster County are included in the Rock Hill Urbanized Area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and is designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) referred to as the Rock Hill - Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS). It is anticipated that the rule changes implemented in the 2020 Census, by the Census Bureau, determining the urbanized area, the RFATS planning area boundary may be adjusted to incorporate additional areas in York and Lancaster Counties. Any changes will take effect by FY 2024. The management of the transportation planning program for RFATS is the responsibility of the City of Rock Hill Planning and Development Services Department.

CRCOG implemented a transportation planning process that includes the identification of local priorities at the county level, the development of regional plans by the transportation advisory committee, and plan approval by the CRCOG Board of Directors. Components of the CRCOG transportation planning process include:

- County-level long-range transportation committees for identification and prioritization of system improvements for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

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- Prioritized projects are forwarded to the CRCOG Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for review, study, and prioritization for incorporation into the regional plan, which is then submitted to the CRCOG Board of Directors.
- The CRCOG Board reviews and approves the Regional TIP and submits to the SCDOT Commission as recommendations for inclusion into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Catawba Regional COG has a 36-member Board of Directors that sets policy for the COG. Approximately half of the membership is comprised of local elected officials from all four counties, including state legislators, county council members, and mayors or city council members. Each county council ratifies appointments made by municipalities represented within each county and appoints the remaining citizen and minority representatives of the Board. Each county and municipality's representation on the Board of Directors is determined by a defined formula based upon population.

To assist the COG Board with transportation planning related evaluation and recommendations, the Catawba Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Committee was formed. The TAC is comprised of voting and non-voting members with representatives from local government transportation providers, and special interest groups. Current voting members include one representative from each county and one municipal representative from each county. Staff and advisory support are provided by Catawba Regional COG, SCDOT District Four staff, public works directors, economic developers, and transportation planners across the region. This committee plays an important role in identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing transportation needs and goals for the region. Because of the TAC and COG board involvement, local governments are directly consulted and allowed to identify transportation needs for possible inclusion in the STIP.

RURAL PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

The Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) for the Catawba Region is developed biennially and documents major transportation planning and related activities within the rural areas of the Catawba Region for the next two fiscal years (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025). The purpose of the RPWP is to identify work program tasks and present budget allocations for planning activities to be undertaken within the CRCOG Study Area. The document also serves as the basis for Federal Highway Administration/Federal Transit Administration (FHWA/FTA), state (SCDOT), and local funding assistance for transportation planning activities.

Catawba Regional COG works closely with various interest groups and local government officials in all four counties of the Catawba Region and within the Charlotte Metropolitan Region to coordinate transportation planning. By providing regional coordination among the planning partners and setting regional recommendations, cities and counties can better coordinate their planning efforts to develop an integrated multimodal transportation system for the Catawba Region and the State of South Carolina.

GENERAL FUNCTIONS

This section relates to general activities to be undertaken throughout the planning process. In the implementation of all items of the work plan, CRCOG will strive to meet the 10 Federal planning factors established by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). The Federal Transportation Authorization legislation was signed into law on December 4, 2015 and refunded under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act. Future updates to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) must comply with FAST Act (or the transportation authorization legislation in effect at that time). The FAST Act guides the transportation planning and programming processes throughout the country through these 10 planning factors:

RPWP Work Element	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I. Program Administration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I-A. Rural Transportation Program Management										
I-B. FAST Act-Transportation Performance Mgt.										
II. Transportation Planning Technical Assistance										
II-A. Transportation Modeling		X	X	X		X	X		X	
II-B. Long Range Planning & TIP	X	X			X	X			X	X
II-C. Transp. Alternatives Program Management							X	X		X
II-D. Technical Assistance				X	X	X		X	X	X
II-E. Transit Planning	X			X		X		X		X
III. Public Participation Process		X		X						

FAST ACT PLANNING FACTORS

1. Support the economic vitality of the area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
4. Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
5. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
6. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
7. Promote efficient system management and operation.
8. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
9. Improve the resilience and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate storm-water impacts on surface transportation.
10. Enhance travel and tourism.

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In addition to the work program elements outlined in this RPWP, work shall include other specific activities as requested by SCDOT. The scope of work may also include activities or studies addressing other transportation planning related issues that may be of specific interest to the region. However, the cost to carry out the entire program must be kept within the financial assistance being provided unless additional funds are made available to finance the work.

I. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

A. Rural Transportation Program Management **\$41,000**

Description:

This activity includes all ongoing department-wide management and administrative activities necessary to initiate and properly manage the transportation planning process. This does not include activities attributable to specific program activities. There are three objectives for this work task:

1. Administration of transportation planning work program activities;
2. Completion of necessary contracts, invoices, progress reports, correspondence, grant applications in support of the work program, and meeting coordination and attendance; and
3. Professional development activities including attendance at regional, state, and national meetings and conferences that provide educational opportunities to identify transportation planning best practices for program staff.

Methodology + Work Product:

- Preparation of meeting agendas, notices, minutes, memorandums, and other correspondence including staff assistance for Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and CRCOG Board of Directors.
- Preparation of quarterly and annual financial progress reports, invoices, and correspondence.
- Completed grant applications and proposals.
- Coordination and support relating to the Statewide Multimodal Plan.
- Participate with the SCDOT on regional transportation studies, reports, and programs.
- Participate in and hold monthly and quarterly meetings with state, regional transportation professionals.

B. FAST Act and Transportation Performance Management

\$20,000

Description:

This activity includes work related to compliance with FAST Act policies and guidance including setting targets for Transportation Performance Management (TPM) as well as other SCDOT Initiatives.

Methodology + Work Product:

- Implementation of FAST Act planning requirements.
- Coordination efforts to develop performance management strategies.
- Coordinate with the SCDOT to implement the Pilot Regional Mobility Program.

II. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A. Transportation Modeling

\$17,000

Description:

This task will include working with the South Carolina Department of Transportation to further develop the existing travel demand model for the Catawba Region. By having this capability, CRCOG staff can work with local jurisdictions and SCDOT in identifying problem areas and analyze alternative highway improvements in the region.

Methodology + Work Product:

An on-going effort to incorporate data into transportation planning products such as the Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model (MRTDM).

- Continued update to GIS traffic count database.
- Continued collection and analysis of building permit data and development approvals for all new construction in the region.
- Continued analysis of employment patterns in the study area.
- Continued collection and analysis of census data and other socioeconomic data for updates to the travel demand model.
- Participation in MRTDM team meetings and activities as appropriate for the Catawba Region. This includes the decennial update to the regional model that will commence in 2023.

B. Long Range Transportation Plan & TIP

\$36,000

Description:

This task will include working with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, and other local and regional government representatives to implement the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP 2021-2045) for the Catawba Region. The LRTP is the guiding policy plan from which the TIP and RPWP are developed. The plan advances the overall movement of people and goods for the region and identifies existing conditions, trends, and transportation needs

and opportunities for the next 20-25 years. The LRTP considers the interrelated nature of transportation and land use decisions and their potential impacts within the region and impacts to the community, economy, and environment. The LRTP is to be updated every five years to reflect the latest changes in transportation, population, and land use trends that may impact the region's future. Development of the Transportation Improvement Program is vital to ensuring timely implementation of the LRTP.

Methodology + Work Product:

In an on-going effort to integrate data into long range transportation planning activities, CRCOG staff will work collaboratively with regional partners to update the Travel Demand Models for South Carolina and the Metrolina region. TIP maintenance is also an on-going task and will be reviewed and approved by the TAC in compliance with SCDOT Commission policies.

- Updated list for potential construction projects including road widening, new road alignments, intersection improvements, safety improvements, sidewalks and bikeways.
- Identification of possible local needs studies and plans.
- Meetings with local government representatives including administrators, elected officials, planners, and economic developers.
- Enhanced public participation through the dissemination of information and receipt of public comments.
- Participation in SCDOT activities related to the Statewide Multimodal Plan Update specific to the Catawba Region.
- Integration of CommunityViz software as a primary source of data for modeling efforts.
- Update of the 2015-2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Update of the 2021-2027 Transportation Improvement Program

C. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Management

\$20,000

Description:

Solicit, evaluate, and develop applications for the Transportation Alternatives Program as appropriate.

Methodology + Work Product:

The CRCOG will continue to provide advisory assistance to eligible applicants with project scope definition and the preparation of bi-yearly TAP application cycles as needed.

- The CRCOG will continue to monitor the development and implementation of previously funded enhancement projects.
- Will seek out potential TAP funding eligible projects and provide direct and indirect support and assistance to rural partner agencies as they pursue TAP grant funding

D. Technical Assistance and Intergovernmental Coordination**\$20,000****Description:**

Foster intergovernmental/interagency coordination to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach to transportation planning and programming. Serve as a liaison between the CRCOG and member governments, the RFATS MPO, federal, state, and local agencies. Also serve as a liaison between the CRCOG and regional transportation planning efforts such as Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation (CRAFT), Metrolina Regional Travel Demand Model, and regional air quality efforts.

Methodology + Work Product:

- The CRCOG will continue to attend RFATS MPO, MRTDM, and CRAFT meetings to ensure representation of South Carolina interests in regional efforts as appropriate.
- The CRCOG will continue to participate in regional transportation and air quality related initiatives as deemed appropriate and beneficial to the Catawba Region.
- The CRCOG will continue ongoing regional initiatives with the Centralina Council of Governments in the Charlotte Metro Region. These regional initiatives include ongoing implementation activities related to CONNECT and other initiatives deemed appropriate and beneficial to the Catawba Region.
- Participate in the Bi-state Regional Intelligent Transportation System/Transportation Incident Management ITS/TIM Strategic Action Plan.
- Coordinate with the Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) and Regional Partners on ongoing initiatives.
- Coordinate with the SCDOT to study the impacts and solutions to Railroad Parking delays within the City of Chester.

E. Transit Planning**\$10,000****Description:**

Be a facilitator of regional collaboration, cooperation, and coordination as applicable.

Professional development activities including attendance at regional, state, and national meetings and conferences that provide educational opportunities to identify transit planning best practices for program staff.

Methodology + Work Product:

SCDOT shall maintain the administrative and oversight functions of all applicable Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs administered by SCDOT (e.g., 5310, 5311). The following are focus areas related to transit initiatives that are established to enhance regional public and specialized transit efficiency and effectiveness:

- Assist SCDOT in improving communication and cooperation among regional transportation providers;
- Partner with RFATS and the other CRAFT agencies in the coordination efforts for the Connect Beyond Project.

- Assist public and human service agencies in assessing gaps and barriers in transportation delivery for public and disadvantaged groups in the region;
- Assist in regional transportation planning efforts including the assessment of mobility needs, economic development related to multimodal planning, and identification of other partnership and funding resources;
- Assist in regional advocacy of public and human service transportation services;
- Facilitate and foster the opportunity for stakeholder meetings related to coordination of transit services (e.g., Study Teams, Coordination Council, and public meetings);
- Facilitate coordination of local human service transportation funding requests:
 - Assisting SCDOT in the dissemination of announcements and application packages within the region of responsibility;
 - Accepting completed applications;
 - Prioritizing projects;
 - COGS: submitting to SCDOT Office of Public Transit a prioritized list of recommended projects for final review and funding recommendations:
 - SCDOT will enter into contractual agreements directly with the sub-recipients as approved by the Commission.
 - The SCDOT Office of Public Transit is responsible for reviewing the regional priority list and making a final recommendation on the award.
 - Each year, SCDOT will determine the appropriate funding level for COGs for administrative purposes.
- Providing any update to the Regional Transit & Coordination Plan.
- Actively participating in the Beyond CONNECT Charlotte Regional Transit Plan.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Implementation of Public Involvement Plan

\$2,000

Description:

This task will include working with the South Carolina Department of Transportation to integrate public involvement as a part of all plans, meetings, public notice and processes.

Methodology + Work Product:

As federal requirements stipulate opportunities for public input, the CRCOG and SCDOT have partnered in the past to host public hearings in affected communities. CRCOG will purposefully integrate community engagement into planning activities to include TIP and LRTP amendments for future transportation projects in the Catawba Region.

IV. Complete Streets Planning Activities

Description:

States, MPOs, and COGs are required to use not less than 2.5% of SPR and PL funds, respectively, on Complete Streets planning activities. This equates to approximately \$3,900 annually.

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Methodology + Work Product

The CRCOG intends to utilize the 2.5% of SPR funding to go towards TAP projects. This will include project identification, project scoping, placement of the project within the LRTP, coordination with the SCDOT and local jurisdiction during project delivery.

V. CRCOG Staff Information

The CRCOG offices are located at 215 Hampton Street, Suite 200, Rock Hill, South Carolina, 29730. All CRCOG staff listed below can be reached by phone at 803.327.9041 and our website is: www.catawbacog.org.

Staff	Tasks
Randy Imler, Executive Director rimler@catawbacog.org	Program Administration
Stephen Allen, AICP Senior Planner sallen@catawbacog.org	Program Administration, Transit Planning, Long Range Planning & TIP, TAP Management, Technical Assistance, Transit and Public Participation
Marty Little, Senior Planner mlittle@catawbacog.org	Transportation Modeling and Technical Assistance
Grazier Rhea, Dir. of Community Dev. grhea@catawbacog.org	Technical Assistance and Public Participation
Erica Stahl, Senior Planner estahl@catawbacog.org	Technical Assistance and Public Participation

CRCOG Budget

In FY 2024-2025, the SCDOT will contract with the CRCOG for transportation planning services. The contract amount is \$125,000. These funds require a 20% local match which produces a total project budget of \$156,250. The budget for the FY 2024-2025 work program, by planning element, is below.

Catawba Regional Council of Governments Rural Transportation Budget Summary FY 2024-2025

Work Element	SCDOT	Local Match	Total	Percent
I. Program Administration				
I-A. Rural Transportation Program Management	\$32,800	\$8,200.00	\$41,000	26%
I-B. Transportation Performance Management	\$8,200	\$2,050.00	\$10,250	7%
II. Transportation Planning Technical Assistance				
II-A. Transportation Modeling	\$13,600	\$3,400.00	\$17,000	11%
II-B. Long Range Planning & TIP	\$28,800	\$7,200.00	\$36,000	23%
II-C. TAP Management	\$16,000	\$4,000.00	\$20,000	13%
II-D. Technical Assistance	\$16,000	\$4,000.00	\$20,000	13%
II-E. Transit Planning	\$8,000	\$2,000.00	\$10,000	6%
III. Public Participation	\$1,600	\$400.00	\$2,000	1%
Annual Total	\$125,000	\$31,250	\$156,250	100%