

1. INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) and Rural Areas of Buncombe and Haywood Counties identifies recommendations to multimodal transportation systems in Buncombe, Haywood, and Henderson Counties (see Figure 1). The CTP includes all three of these counties in their entirety. Figure 2 depicts the geographic location of the study area in western North Carolina.

The FBRMPO includes all of Henderson and portions of Haywood and Buncombe Counties. In addition to these three counties, there are fifteen towns and cities within the CTP area:

- City of Asheville
- Town of Biltmore Forest
- Town of Black Mountain
- Town of Canton
- Town of Clyde
- Village of Flat Rock
- Town of Fletcher
- City of Hendersonville
- Town of Laurel Park
- Town of Maggie Valley
- Town of Mills River
- Town of Montreat
- Town of Waynesville
- Town of Weaverville
- Town of Woodfin

All fifteen municipalities and the three counties are FBRMPO members. In addition, the rural areas of Buncombe and Haywood Counties not included within the FBRMPO boundary fall within the purview of the Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization (RPO).

See Figure 1 for a depiction of this plan. The NCDOT and the FBRMPO have been working for a number of years on a series of long-range transportation plans and travel demand models. These efforts predate the formation of FBRMPO in 2005, and included separate transportation plans and models for the Asheville MPO and the Hendersonville area, as well as older thoroughfare plans for some other jurisdictions. In 2005, these efforts led to development of a single regional travel demand model that covers all of Buncombe and most of Henderson and Haywood Counties. This model helped inform the process that led to the September 22, 2005 FBRMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which provides the basis for most of the analysis and recommendations incorporated in the CTP.

Beginning in March 2007, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) and the FBRMPO began the process of developing the first CTP for the entire French Broad River MPO. This report documents the process of developing the CTP, and summarizes the recommendations for each mode, by county.

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan is intended to ensure that the region’s transportation system is developed in a coordinated and efficient manner that anticipates future needs and minimizes negative impacts on communities, cultural resources, and the natural environment. By providing a consistent, comprehensive, geographical database of recommendations for all modes, the CTP helps elected officials, local planners, NCDOT engineers, and others to program and implement individual projects while considering potential interactions with other planned projects, regardless of mode. To that end, existing and future transportation needs (through 2030) have been studied in producing this CTP. Because of the long-range nature of this plan, it is infrastructure-focused, in the sense that it is intended to support decisions regarding long-term investments. The CTP helps identify cost-effective projects that are consistent with existing and planned land use, while avoiding interference with other transportation projects. Essential to the CTP, therefore, are the Appendices B and C to this report, listing all recommendations and their basic attributes (both existing and future), as well as describing typical cross-sections.

Estimates of growth in households and employment form the basis of the travel demand forecasts used to help identify transportation needs in this study. Since future conditions are impossible to predict with absolute accuracy, the CTP cannot be a static tool. Changes in growth rates or patterns, transportation funding, environmental policies, and other variables will almost certainly occur over the life of this plan. It will be necessary to update the CTP to reflect any such changes, and to reflect the latest thinking about future land uses, travel demands, and appropriate solutions. It may be necessary to add or delete projects, modify their scope, or rearrange priorities. Any such changes must preserve the integrity of the overall plan with respect to coordination among other projects, and consistency with all elements of the CTP.

The initiative for updating and implementing the CTP starts mainly with the local policy boards, technical staff, and citizens of the planning area. NCDOT, along with local governments, is responsible for actual construction of recommended projects. Given the intense competition statewide for limited transportation funds, local areas must be proactive, innovative, and persistent in promoting their priorities to obtain the funding needed to complete their projects. The CTP provides a solid foundation for this effort.

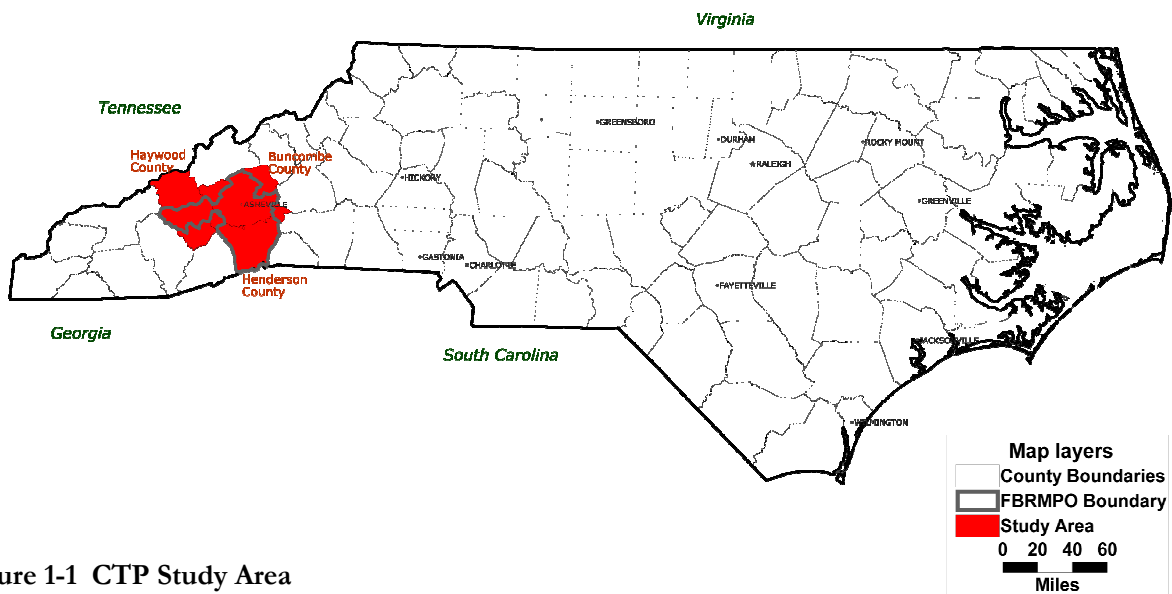


Figure 1-1 CTP Study Area