



Title VI Plan

Fiscal Years 2021-2024

GSATS Revisions

| # | TCC | TAC | Study Team | Policy Committee | Public Comment Period |
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WRCOG Revisions

| # | RTC | BOD | Public Comment Period |
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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REVISIONS

11/22/2020
03/04/2021

Per SCDOT/FHWA - TMA Review
Per FTA Office of Civil Rights

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TITLE VI POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG)/Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) to comply with all federal and state authorities requiring nondiscrimination, including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice) and 13166 (Limited English Proficiency). WRCOG/GSATS does not and will not exclude from participation in; deny the benefits of; or subject anyone to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or income.

All federally-assisted programs will be administered in a manner to guarantee that WRCOG/GSATS, other recipients, subrecipients, contractors, subcontractors, transferees, and other participants in Federal financial assistance comply with all requirements imposed by or pursuant to, civil rights acts and Department of Transportation regulations. WRCOG/GSATS is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing required reports, and other WRCOG/GSATS responsibilities as required by 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 200 and 49 Code of Federal Regulation Part 21.

Those requiring information in alternative formats or in a language subject to the WRCOG/GSATS Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, should contact the Title VI Liaison.

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
Grand Strand Area Transportation Study
(Name of Recipient)

by _____
(Signature of Authorized Official)

Dated _____

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The terms used in this plan have the meanings as prescribed below. Where terms are not defined, reference should be made to the definitions contained within the governing federal law or Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines.

Amendment - A significant change to the adopted Public Participation Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Congestion Management Process, or Unified Planning Work Program. Amendments require additional opportunities for public involvement and approval by the Policy Committee.

Administrative Modification - A correction or update to the Transportation Improvement Program or other MPO or RPO planning process that does not require Policy Committee approval or additional public involvement. Corrections do not include the addition or removal of projects, significant changes in project scope, or significant changes in cost. In determining whether a proposed change would constitute an amendment or correction, reference should be made to the latest DOT guidance. For TIP amendments or modifications (South Carolina), reference should be made to SCDOT guidance published on March 25, 2014 or the latest revision.

Congestion Management Process (CMP) - A planning process required for Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) that seeks to locally define and assess the significance of congestion, formulates management strategies, and develops multimodal performance measures.

Department of Transportation (DOT) - This term includes the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and all agencies and divisions thereof.

Environmental Justice - A federal policy that protects minority and low income populations from experiencing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of federally-funded programs, policies, and activities.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - The USDOT agency that oversees the distribution of federal funds for the activities pertaining to road systems in each state.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) - The USDOT agency that oversees the distribution of federal funds for transit activities in each state.

Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) - The GSATS Policy Committee is the MPO for portions of Horry and Georgetown counties in South Carolina and the southeastern portion of Brunswick County in North Carolina.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - A long range transportation plan resulting from collaboration and consensus that serves as the defining vision for the area's transportation system. The plan indicates the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next twenty (20) years and provides both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system in the rural planning area.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - A regional policy body, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, and designated by local officials and the governor(s) of the affected state(s). MPOs, in cooperation with state(s) and other transportation providers, are responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - A long range transportation plan resulting from collaboration and consensus that serves as the defining vision for the area's transportation system. The plan indicates the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next twenty (20) years and provides both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system in the urban planning area.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) - The transportation act that replaced SAFETEA-LU.

Policy Committee - GSATS' governing board which is made up of twenty-four (24) members with representation from area jurisdictions, NCDOT, SCDOT, and public transit providers.

Rural Policy Committee - RPO's governing board. The WRCOG Board of Directors serves as the Rural Policy Committee.

Rural Planning Work Program - The RPWP is the management plan for the rural planning area. It provides a description of tasks and required coordination activities to be undertaken by the rural transportation planning program.

Study Area - The geographic area in which the metropolitan planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607) must be carried out. The urban study area is also called the Metropolitan Planning Area and the rural study area is called the Rural Planning Area.

Study Team - A technical advisory committee that makes recommendations to the GSATS Policy Committee. The Study Team is composed of planning directors, city administrators, and other non-elected officials from the South Carolina portion of the study area.

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) - A regional policy body, required in rural planning areas and designated by local officials and the governor(s) of the affected state(s). RPOs, in cooperation with state(s) and other transportation providers, are responsible for carrying out the long range transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation. The WRCOG serves as the RPO for the three-county region.

Rural Technical Committee (RTC) - A technical advisory committee that makes recommendations to the Rural Planning Area Policy Committee. The RTC is composed of planning directors, city administrators, and other non-elected officials from the rural planning study area.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) - A technical advisory committee that makes recommendations to the TAC. The TCC is composed of planning directors, town administrators, and other non-elected officials from the North Carolina portion of the study area.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) - An advisory committee consisting of elected and appointed officials that makes recommendations to the Policy Committee on issues impacting the North Carolina portion of the study area.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - A document prepared by the MPO in coordination with the state that lists projects in the urbanized area to be funded with FHWA/FTA funds for the next seven (7) or more years. A **Rural TIP** is prepared by rural planning to identify projects in the rural planning area.

Title VI - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - The UPWP is the management plan for the MPO. It provides a description of tasks and required coordination activities to be undertaken by the transportation planning program.

WACCAMAW REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (WRCOG)

GRAND STRAND AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (GSATS)

TITLE VI PLAN

INTRODUCTION

"It has been The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) and the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) longstanding policy to actively ensure nondiscrimination under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act in federally funded activities. Under Title VI and related statutes, each Federal agency is required to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarified the intent of Title VI to include all program and activities of Federal-aid recipients, subrecipients and contractors whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not." (United States Department of Transportation)

WRCOG

The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) serves as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO). WRCOG is a public agency created by the counties of Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg, and the cities of Andrews, Atlantic Beach, Aynor, Briarcliffe Acres, Conway, Georgetown, Greeleyville, Hemingway, Kingstree, Lane, Loris, Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Pawleys Island, Stuckey, and Surfside Beach, as enabled by state planning law. The agency was organized in 1969 and has been providing planning, management, and technical assistance to its member governments and local transit service providers since its inception. WRCOG receives federal assistance through South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) to support rural transportation planning process in the organization's service areas.

Planning Area

WRCOG rural transportation program serves portions of two (2) counties and one (1) entire county including eight (8) municipalities in the rural transportation planning area. WRCOG serves the rural areas (outside of the urbanized areas) in following counties:

Georgetown, SC
Horry, SC
Williamsburg, SC

Board and Committees

WRCOG is governed by the Board of Directors, which is made up of former and current elected officials, as well as appointed members representing nineteen (19) jurisdictions, and makes decisions for the RPO. The Board of Directors appointment is through Legislative Delegation. There are also three (3) ex-officio resident legislator board members appointed under a provision of state law. The rural transportation planning is overseen by the Rural Technical Committee (RTC), which is made up of twenty one (21) members representing sixteen (16) jurisdictions. The RTC provides technical support and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. Committee membership was determined by the approved committees' bylaws. The committees' responsibilities are:

- The Rural Technical Committee (RTC) provides technical expertise in the development of transportation plans and programs for the rural area. The RTC also provides recommendation to the WRCOG Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors (BOD) receives, reviews, and takes action (approves, denies, or sends back for reconsideration) on all issues and items brought to it by the WRCOG's planning staff and the Rural Technical Committee. Review and approval responsibilities include the adoption of WRCOG's TIP, LRTP, and UPWP.

GSATS

The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for carrying out the federally mandated urban transportation planning and programming process in the urbanized area, and developing regional transportation plans. GSATS is the federally designated recipient for Section 5307, 5310, and 5339 funds and is responsible for ensuring that transportation programs utilizing federal funds in the Myrtle Beach-Socastee region are based on a continuing, comprehensive, and coordinated planning process.

GSATS seeks to build a stronger regional community through cooperation, leadership, and planning. Through GSATS leadership, representatives from area jurisdictions meet and discuss concerns and transportation issues in the region, and identify the opportunities for cooperative solutions. These strategies to enhance the effectiveness of local government include:

- A forum for addressing regional objectives and diverse community issues;
- Long-range planning and public policy coordination; and
- Technical assistance and services to enhance the effectiveness of local government.

Planning Area

GSATS serves portions of three (3) counties and fourteen (14) municipalities in the Metropolitan planning area. GSATS boundary includes portions of the following counties:

Georgetown, SC
Horry, SC
Brunswick, NC

Board and Committees

GSATS is governed by the Policy Committee which consists of locally elected and appointed members representing seventeen (17) units of local government. GSATS Policy Committee consists of twenty four (24) voting members, twenty (20) locally elected officials, and four (4) appointed members. The appointed members represent the following:

Waccamaw Regional Transportation Authority (Coast RTA)
South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)
South Carolina DOT Commission
North Carolina DOT Board of Transportation

Transportation planning at GSATS is overseen by the Study Team in the South Carolina portion of the GSATS study area, and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) in the North Carolina portion of the GSATS study area. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) serves as the principle review and recommending body to the Policy Committee on projects and issues affecting

the North Carolina portion of the study area. The TCC provides technical support and makes recommendations to the TAC.

For certain activities where issues are particular to North Carolina and/or NCDOT requirements, such as adoption of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the TAC exercises final review and approval authority for the MPO.

The Policy Committee receives, reviews, and takes action (approves, denies, or sends back for reconsideration) on all issues and items brought to it by the MPO planning staff, the Study Team, or the TAC. Review and approval responsibilities include the adoption of the MPO's TIP, MTP, and UPWP.

Study Team, TCC, and TAC all provide technical support and recommendations to the Policy Committee. Committee membership is determined by the Memorandum of Understanding and the bylaws of the committees. Policy Committee appointment is by virtue of the office or position being held. Where one (1) entity has two (2) seats, the second seat is by action of the county or municipal council. The Study Team, TCC, and the TAC members are also appointed by virtue of the office or position held.

Benefits of working with the MPO include:

- A voice in key regional decisions;
- Distribution of federal transportation dollars;
- Technical assistance to obtain federal and state funding;
- Education and training opportunities;
- Data to meet special planning needs;
- Access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) databases;
- Access to data products; and
- Technical expertise.

Subrecipients

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) dba Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) is a Designated Recipient for FTA Section 5310 Grant Awards for the Myrtle Beach-Socastee Urbanized Area (UZA). Subrecipients for the Section 5310 award sign a Subrecipient Grant Agreement before the funds can pass through GSATS. Section 5310 grants awarded for the Rural Study Area are awarded and administered by South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Office of Public Transit (OPT).

TITLE VI PLAN

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A designated Planner for WRCOG/GSATS serves as the Title IV Coordinator and is responsible for ensuring implementation and overall administration of the agency's Title VI program.

Program Areas

Five (5) areas of the work program have been identified as Title VI Program Areas and are applicable to Title VI regulations.

1. Communications and public participation;
2. Planning and programming;
3. Environmental Affairs;
4. Consultant contracts; and
5. Education and training.

The agency's Title VI-related responsibilities fall into two (2) main categories. "General Responsibilities" are applicable to all five (5) Title VI Program Areas, and "Program Area Responsibilities" are specific to each Title VI Program Area. It is important to note that the first three (3) Title VI Program Areas noted above are extremely interrelated and have been treated separately for purposes of clarity and corresponding to agency organization. For example, the Communications and Public Participation program area applies to and affects the agency work program as a whole, particularly agency efforts and responsibilities related to planning, programming, and environmental affairs.

Title VI Coordinator Responsibilities

The Title VI Coordinator is responsible for supervising staff activities pertaining to Title VI regulations and procedures set forth in federal guidance and in accordance with WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Plan. The Title VI Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Identify, investigate, and work to eliminate discrimination when found to exist;
- Process Title VI complaints received by WRCOG/GSATS, as described in **Appendix II**;
- Meet with appropriate staff members to monitor and discuss progress, implementation, and compliance issues related to WRCOG/GSATS Title VI program;
- Periodically review the agency's Title VI program to assess if administrative procedures are effective, staffing is appropriate, and adequate resources are available to ensure compliance;
- Work with staff, consultants, and recipients to resolve any deficiency status and write a remedial action if necessary (as described in the consultant contracts section of this plan) if a federal funding recipient is found to not be in compliance with Title VI;
- Review important Title VI-related issues with the WRCOG Executive Director and the MPO Director; and
- Assess communications and public involvement strategies to ensure adequate participation of impacted Title VI protected groups and address additional language needs.

Other Staff Member Responsibilities

Other staff members, in coordination with the Title VI Coordinator, will at times be asked to accept or share responsibility for day-to-day administration of the Title VI program, including

implementation of the plan and Title VI compliance, program monitoring, reporting, and education within an applicable program area, as described in the "Program Area Responsibilities" section of this document. In addition, some staff members may be asked to accept responsibility for drafting text for an assigned section of the Annual Title VI Report and Update, and maintaining the data and documentation necessary for that report. These responsibilities may include reviewing guidelines and procedures for the assigned Title VI Program Area, and incorporating Title VI-related language and provisions into agency documents, as appropriate.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are general responsibilities, applicable to all five (5) Title VI Program Areas. WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Coordinator is generally responsible for overseeing Title VI compliance in each of the program areas. Other staff members are expected to provide information and support to assist this staff member in performing his or her tasks.

Data Collection

Statistical data on race, color, national origin, income level, language spoken, and sex of participants in, and beneficiaries of, federally funded programs is to be gathered and maintained as described in the "Program Area Responsibilities" section of this document. The data gathering process will be reviewed regularly to ensure sufficiency of the data in meeting the requirements of the Title VI program.

Annual Report and Update

An Annual Report and Update is to be submitted by the end of September each year to SCDOT, NCDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Title VI Coordinator is responsible for gathering information from appropriate staff members and consolidating this information into the final document. The final document is to include:

- A report on the previous year's Title VI-related activities and efforts, including accomplishments and program changes; and
- An update on Title VI-related goals and objectives for the upcoming year.

Annual Review of Title VI Program

Each year, in preparing for the Annual Report and Update, the Title VI Coordinator will review the agency's Title VI program to ensure compliance. In addition, he or she will review agency operational guidelines and publications, including those for contractors, to ensure that Title VI language and provisions are incorporated, as appropriate.

Dissemination of Information Related to the Title VI Program

Information on the agency's Title VI program is to be disseminated to agency employees, contractors, and beneficiaries, as well as to the public, as described in the "Program Area Responsibilities" section of this document, and in other languages when needed.

Resolution of Complaints

Any individual may exercise his or her right to file a complaint with WRCOG/GSATS, if that person believes that he or she or any other program beneficiaries have been subjected to unequal treatment or discrimination in their receipt of benefits/services. WRCOG/GSATS will make a

concerted effort to resolve complaints as put forth in its Title VI Complaint Procedure, found in the **Discrimination Complaint Procedures** section of this plan, and the Title VI Complaint Form found in **Appendix III**.

PROGRAM AREA RESPONSIBILITIES

Program Area 1: Communications and Public Participation

Note: The Communications and Public Participation Program Area applies to and affects the agency work program as a whole, particularly agency efforts and responsibilities related to the Planning, Programming, and Environmental Affairs Program Areas. It has been treated as a separate program area for purposes of clarity, and corresponding to agency organization. Please review the adopted Public Participation Plan in its entirety at www.gsats.org.

As stated in both the agency's Public Participation Plans, "The vision for the public participation plan is that the public will be provided thorough information on transportation planning services and project development in a convenient and timely manner." This Public Participation Plan provides the outline of procedures for ensuring open and effective communication with citizens in both the rural and Myrtle Beach-Socastee SC/NC region.

Principles of Public Participation Plans

Public participation plans are intended to promote a relationship among stakeholders, governments, and advisory groups. In an effort to effectively build these relationships, the WRCOG/GSATS shall:

- Actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in federal and state law as well as in this document;
- Keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities on a continuous basis;
- Encourage the participation of all citizens in the transportation planning process;
- Strive to continuously improve public participation; and
- Participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction.

Public Participation Plan Techniques

Public participation has many forms. Seldom is one (1) form adequate to reach all of the public, thus making it necessary to use a combination of techniques to ensure the optimum amount of public involvement.

Charrettes - Charrettes are typically intense, possibly multi-day meetings involving municipal officials, planning officials, and local residents. A charrette is instrumental in identifying key issues early, promoting joint ownership of the solution, and attempting to diffuse traditional confrontation between stakeholders;

Consultation - As part of FAST Act regulations encouraging more cooperative planning, the agency will consult, as appropriate, with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation within both urban and rural study areas. To

coordinate the planning function to the maximum extent practicable, the agency maintains an open consultation policy. Consultation includes (but not limited to):

- *Comparing LRTPs and TIPs as they are developed with the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies*
- *Contact with the following groups: State, local, Indian Tribal, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources consideration, and historic preservation*
- *Inclusion of private citizen and transportation entities in the WRCOG/GSATS study areas in the consultation process;*

Display Ads - Display ads are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. They are published in the local section of the newspaper in order to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal ads;

Direct Mailings - Direct mailings are used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area, group of people, or the media. Direct mailings are usually letters, but can be postcards or fliers. An area may be targeted for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project. Groups are targeted that may have an interest in a specific issue, for example, avid cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects;

Email Announcements/Internet Message Boards - Meeting announcements and agency information are emailed to interested persons that have submitted their email addresses to the transportation planning staff. Interactive message boards can be used to facilitate discussion and solicit public comment regarding specific projects or issues; and

Legal Advertisements - The agency provides advanced notice of any public meeting where a decision could be made that would result in a significant change to an existing plan or program. Ads are published to solicit public comment and review of the requested change or plan update. The ads provide a description of the meeting agenda, including contact information.

Opportunities for Public Comments

WRCOG/GSATS routinely offers different ways for people to comment on activities, programs, and decisions made by the agency. These opportunities include:

Comments are accepted at any time - Comments are accepted via an online comment form, by phone, fax, email, US mail, and in person at any board or committee meeting. Contact information for all staff is provided on the agency website, and contact information is included in all publications produced for WRCOG/GSATS. The agencies make every effort to respond to all comments received;

Citizen comments are requested at meetings - All of WRCOG Board of Directors and GSATS Policy Committee meetings are open to the public. Meeting dates are posted well in advance on the agency's website. Public comments and responses made during these meetings are kept on record in the official meeting minutes. The staff maintains mailing lists, to which anyone can request to be added; and

Formal public comment periods for major activities - *Formal public comment and review periods are used to solicit comments on major planning and programming activities, for example, the proposed distribution of funds, major amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), changes to policies (such as the Public Participation Plan), and updates to Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The comment period is noted in the legal public notice, agency publications, the agency's website, and various press releases. Comments can be made in person, using a comment form on the agency's website, by email, by US mail, fax, or telephone. WRCOG/GSATS will make every effort to respond to any comments received, and will forward comments to other agencies when appropriate. Received comments and staff responses will be reviewed at the next applicable committee meeting(s), at which time the committee(s) will determine whether it is appropriate to proceed with the recommended action.*

Strategies for Engaging Title VI Protected Groups

We realize that there are large segments of the population from whom input is rarely, if ever, received. In an effort to hear a truly representative voice of the public, WRCOG/GSATS will take the approach of "going to the public" as a strategy to receive public comment. These strategies include:

- *Plan meeting locations carefully - Public meetings should be held in locations that are accessible by public transit. Also, facilities should be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If a targeted population is located in a certain geographic area, then the meeting location should be in that area for their convenience;*
- *Seek help from community leaders and organizations - To facilitate involvement of traditionally underserved populations, community leaders and organizations that represent these groups should be consulted about how to most effectively reach their members. Relationships with these groups should be maintained for future partnerships in the planning process;*
- *Provide services for the disabled - Upon advance notice, deaf interpreters, translators, and Braille documents can be provided for public meetings. Notifications of opportunities for public involvement will include contact information for people needing these or other special accommodations. Requests must be made at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting; and*
- *Be sensitive to diverse audiences - At public meetings, staff members should attempt to communicate as effectively as possible. Technical jargon should be avoided and appropriate dress and conduct are important. For some meetings, it may be best to use trained facilitators or language translators to better communicate with the audience.*

Title VI Responsibilities

Staff involved in public involvement is responsible for evaluating and monitoring compliance with Title VI requirements in all aspects of the agency's public involvement process. These staff members will:

- *Ensure that all communications and public involvement efforts comply with Title VI;*

- Develop and distribute information on Title VI and agency programs to the general public. Provide information in languages other than English, as needed;
- Disseminate information to minority media and ethnic/gender related organizations, to help ensure all social, economic, and ethnic interest groups in the region are represented in the planning process;
- Include the Title VI Notice to the Public, full or abbreviated versions, in relevant press releases and on the agency website;
- Notify affected and protected groups of public hearings regarding proposed actions, and make the hearings accessible to all residents. This includes the use of interpreters when requested, or when a strong need for their use has been identified;
- Collect statistical information on attendees of public meetings to track how well different segments of the population are represented; and
- Encourage committee structures to include representation from identified Title VI populations.

Program Area 2: Planning and Programming

WRCOG/GSATS is responsible for developing long and short-range transportation plans to provide efficient transportation services to the areas that are served. A comprehensive transportation planning process is used, which entails the monitoring and collection of data pertaining to transportation issues. WRCOG/GSATS coordinates with SCDOT, NCDOT, cities, towns, counties, and area transit agencies; seeks public participation; and provides technical support when needed.

Operational Guidelines

Primary guidance is provided by:

- The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- The Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
- The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)
- Regulations 23 CFR 450
- South Carolina Department of Transportation
- North Carolina Department of Transportation

Key Planning and Programming Activities

WRCOG/GSATS receives federal funds to develop regional transportation plans and programs and to coordinate technical and policy studies on a wide range of transportation and other programs. The primary products of the transportation planning process include:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) *Rural*
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) *Urban and Rural*
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) *Urban*
- Public Participation Plan (PPP) *Urban and Rural*
- Congestion Management Process (CMP)*
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) *Urban*
- Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) *Rural*

**Note that WRCOG is responsible for the rural transportation planning, therefore, the agency does not have to produce a CMP.*

Considerations of Title VI

Considerations of Title VI legislation are made throughout WRCOG/GSATS planning and programming activities, for example:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - *The development of a long range transportation plan ensures that the burdens and benefits of planned transportation activities are equitably distributed across racial and socio-economic groups. The staff reviews the impacts that planned programs and projects would have on low-income and minority residents in such areas as transportation investments, effect of projects on travel times for area residents, and access to transit;*
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - *The purpose of the MTP is to provide systematic, long-range planning projects and programs in the urbanized areas. The process identifies needs, financial resources available, and priorities that effect the transportation system. Staff reviews the impacts of potential projects and programs to determine impacts on residents and transportation barriers; and*
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - *The TIP is a seven-year program of transportation capital projects together with a three-year estimate of transit capital and maintenance requirements.*

Title VI Responsibilities

Staff members involved in planning and programming are responsible for evaluating and monitoring compliance with Title VI requirements in all aspects of the planning and programming processes. These staff members will:

- Ensure that all aspects of the planning and programming process operation comply with Title VI;
- Prepare and update a demographic profile of the region using the most current and appropriate statistical information available on race, income, and other pertinent data. Make the document available to the public and member agencies on both website or in hard copy format, if requested;
- Develop a process for assessing the distributional effects of transportation investments in the region as part of actions on plan and programming documents; and
- Continue to ensure that staff makes concerted efforts to involve members of all social, economic, and ethnic groups in the planning process.

Program Area 3: Environmental Affairs

The concept of environmental justice includes the identification and assessment of disproportionately high and adverse effects of programs, policies, or activities on minority and low-income population groups. Within the context of the transportation planning, environmental justice considers the relative distribution of cost and benefits from transportation investments, strategies, and policies among different segments of society. See **Environmental Justice Plan** section.

Operational Guidelines

WRCOG/GSATS uses Executive Order 12898 on environmental justice, and federal and state administrative guidelines for implementing environmental justice requirements.

Title VI Responsibilities

Staff members are responsible for evaluating and monitoring environmental justice compliance with Title VI. Staff members will:

- Ensure Title VI environmental justice compliance;
- Analyze and make findings regarding the population affected by the action;
- Analyze and make findings regarding the impacts of planned projects on protected Title VI groups, and determine if there will be a disproportionately high and adverse impact on these groups; and
- Disseminate information to the public on the processes used and findings of any analysis, in accordance with all agency public participation procedures. This includes dissemination to groups representing minority media and ethnic/gender related organizations, and the use of public comment periods and public hearings, interpreters, and materials in other languages, as needed.

Program Area 4: Consultant Contracts

WRCOG/GSATS is responsible for the selection, negotiation, and administration of its consultant contracts. WRCOG/GSATS operate under its internal contract procedures and all relevant federal and state laws.

Operational Guidelines

- Title 48, CFR 31 - Contract Cost Principles and Procedures
- Title 49, CFR 18 - Common Grant Rule
- Title 49 - FTA Grant Contracting Requirements
- Title 23, CFR 172 - Administration of Engineering and Design related Service Contracts

Contract Procedures

WRCOG/GSATS contract procedures are outlined in the "UPWP". Both agencies verify Title VI compliance by consultants (subrecipients of federal funds) in the contracting process. All agency contracts will ensure that consultants comply with Title VI requirements. In addition, Title VI text is included in all Requests for Proposals (RFPs).

Title VI Responsibilities

Staff members are responsible for ensuring that all consultant contracts are in compliance with Title VI. Staff members will:

- Ensure inclusion of Title VI language in contracts and RFPs;
- Ensure that all consultants verify their compliance with Title VI procedures and requirements; and,
- If a recipient or subrecipient is found to not be in compliance with Title VI, the Title VI Coordinator and relevant staff will work with the recipient or subrecipient to resolve the deficiency status and will require remedial action if necessary.

Program Area 5: Education and Training

Minorities, women, veterans, individuals with a disability, and other individuals protected by Title VI and federal and state anti-discrimination laws are provided with equal opportunity and fair treatment in all employment-related decisions, including opportunities for education and training.

Employees Encouraged to Participate in Training

All employees are encouraged to participate in professional development and training. All materials received by the agency on training and education opportunities are made available to all employees, which includes all information on federally funded training, such as courses provided by the National Highway Institute (NHI) and National Transit Institute (NTI).

Title VI Responsibilities

Under the category of education and training, Title VI responsibilities include:

- Assisting in the distribution of information to the staff on training programs regarding Title VI and related statutes;
- Ensure equal access to, and participation in, applicable NHI and NTI courses for qualified employees;
- Track staff participation in Title VI, NHI, and NTI courses; and,
- Establish, maintain, and update Title VI general information pertaining to the administration of the Title VI program, as well as related documents (complaint form, etc.).

Questions

The Title VI public notice will be disseminated to town halls, libraries, and government buildings that WRCOG serves in the urban and rural study areas. The Title VI public notice will also be posted in the WRCOG office. For questions on WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Plan and Procedures, please contact the Title VI Coordinator at (843) 546-8502 or by email at etucker@wrcog.org.

For information on GSATS work programs or publications, please see the GSATS website, www.gsats.org. For information on WRCOG work program or publications, please see the WRCOG website, www.wrcog.org.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

LEP POLICY STATEMENT

The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy guidance was prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq., and the implementing regulations which provide that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. The purpose of the policy is to identify the Title VI responsibilities of organizations that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166

Executive Order 13166 "Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency," reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), directs each federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying obligation. Executive Order 13166 further directs that all such guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Policy Guidance entitled "Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964--National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency." (See 65 FR 50123, August 16, 2000 DOJ's General LEP Guidance). Different treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of national origin discrimination.

Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state agencies, local agencies and governments such as the COG and MPO, private and non-profit entities, and subrecipients.

PLAN SUMMARY

The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) have developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP persons seeking meaningful access to WRCOG/GSATS programs as required by Executive Order 13166. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

This plan details procedures on how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, training staff, how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available, and information for future plan updates. In developing the plan and extent of obligation to provide LEP services, WRCOG/GSATS undertook a U.S. Department of Transportation Four Factor LEP analysis which considers the following:

1. Number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the region to be served or likely to encounter a WRCOG or GSATS program, activity, or service;
2. Frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with a WRCOG/GSATS program;
3. Nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by WRCOG/GSATS to the LEP population; and
4. Resources available to WRCOG/GSATS and overall costs to provide LEP assistance. A brief description of these considerations is provided in the following section.

FOUR FACTOR LEP ANALYSIS

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to encounter a WRCOG/GSATS program, activity, or service.

In 2010, the census did not include any Limited English Proficiency data, however, the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) identifies estimates "Language Spoken at Home" for the individual counties, and the 2011-2015 ACS identifies 5-year estimates for the UZA. Within the UZA, approximately 9.1% of the population speaks a language other than English and of this population, 43.4% speak English less than "very well. (See Table Below)

| Subject | Myrtle Beach--Socastee Urbanized Area | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | South Carolina—North Carolina | | | | | |
| | Total | | Percent of specified language speakers | | | |
| | | | Speak English "very well" | | Speak English less than "very well" | |
| | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error |
| Population 5 years and over | 221,891 | +/-1,983 | | | | |
| Speak only English | 90.9% | +/-1.1 | (X) | (X) | (X) | (X) |
| Speak a language other than English | 9.1% | +/-1.1 | 56.6% | +/-4.0 | 43.4% | +/-7.1 |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 5.5% | +/-7.8 | 52.3% | +/-12.1 | 47.7% | +/-8.6 |
| Other Indo-European languages | 2.1% | +/-0.3 | 69.4% | +/-8.5 | 31.6% | +/-10 |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 1.0% | +/-0.2 | 60.6% | +/-9.0 | 39.4% | +/-37.9 |
| Other languages | 0.5% | +/-0.2 | 71.4% | +/-27.9 | 29.6% | +/-27.9 |

| Subject | WRCOG Service Area | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Georgetown County, South Carolina | | | | | |
| | Total | | Percent of specified language speakers | | | |
| | | | Speak English "very well" | | Speak English less than "very well" | |
| | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error |
| Population 5 years and over | 58,137 | +/-27 | 98.7% | +/-0.3 | 1.3% | +/-0.3 |
| Speak only English | 96.3% | +/-0.4 | (X) | (X) | (X) | (X) |
| Speak a language other than English | 3.5% | +/-0.4 | 61% | +/-7.1 | 39% | +/-7.1 |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 2.5% | +/-0.3 | 54% | +/-8.6 | 46% | +/-8.6 |
| Other Indo-European languages | 0.7% | +/-0.2 | 85.5% | +/-10 | 14.5% | +/-10 |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 0.3% | +/-0.2 | 61.7% | +/-37.9 | 38.3% | +/-37.9 |
| Other languages | 0.0% | +/-0.1 | - | ** | - | ** |

| Subject | WRCOG Service Area | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Horry County, South Carolina | | | | | |
| | Total | | Percent of specified language speakers | | | |
| | | | Speak English "very well" | | Speak English less than "very well" | |
| | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error |
| Population 5 years and over | 294,436 | +/-86 | 97% | +/-0.3 | 3.0% | +/-0.3 |
| Speak only English | 92.5% | +/-0.4 | (X) | (X) | (X) | (X) |
| Speak a language other than English | 7.5% | +/-0.4 | 59.6% | +/-3.3 | 40.4% | +/-3.3 |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 4.5% | +/-0.2 | 54.5% | +/-4.6 | 45.5% | +/-4.6 |
| Other Indo-European languages | 1.6% | +/-0.2 | 75.2% | +/-5.9 | 24.8% | +/-5.9 |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 0.9% | +/-0.2 | 47.6% | +/-9.5 | 52.4% | +/-9.5 |
| Other languages | 0.5% | +/-0.2 | 77.5% | +/-7.7 | 22.5% | +/-7.7 |

| Subject | WRCOG Service Area | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Williamsburg County, South Carolina | | | | | |
| | Total | | Percent of specified language speakers | | | |
| | | | Speak English "very well" | | Speak English less than "very well" | |
| | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error | Estimate | Margin of Error |
| Population 5 years and over | 30,605 | +/-5 | 99.1% | +/-0.3 | .9% | +/-0.3 |
| Speak only English | 96.6% | +/-0.6 | (X) | (X) | (X) | (X) |
| Speak a language other than English | 3.4% | +/-0.6 | 72.1% | +/-8.5 | 27.9% | +/-8.5 |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 2.4% | +/-0.6 | 69.4% | +/-9.9 | 35.1% | +/-9.9 |
| Other Indo-European languages | 0.3% | +/-0.1 | 85.5% | +/-22 | 14.5% | +/-22 |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 0.5% | +/-0.3 | 87.5% | +/-20.5 | 12.5% | +/-20.5 |
| Other languages | 0.2% | +/-0.2 | 100% | +/-37.9 | - | +/-37.9 |

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with a WRCOG/GSATS program, activity, or service.

WRCOG/GSATS assess the frequency at which staff has or could possibly have contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and surveying public meeting attendees. From January 1 to December 31, 2018, no requests for Spanish or other language speaking interpreters and no requests for translated documents were received.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the WRCOG/GSATS to LEP Community.

In both the urban and rural areas, Spanish is the second most commonly spoken language. WRCOG/GSATS will make efforts to contact local Hispanic Outreach Organizations to identify

the transportation concerns of the Hispanic community. To help accommodate the Spanish-speaking population, as well as populations that speak other languages, a translation feature is on both the WRCOG/GSATS websites.

4. The resources available to WRCOG/GSATS and overall costs.

WRCOG/GSATS assessed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance. This included identifying what staff and volunteer language interpreters are readily available, how much a professional interpreter and translation service would cost, which documents should be translated, taking an inventory of available organizations that the WRCOG/GSATS could partner with for outreach and translation efforts, examining which financial and in-kind sources could be used to provide assistance, and what level of staff training is needed. After analyzing the four factors, the WRCOG/GSATS developed the plan outlined in the following section for assisting persons with limited English proficiency.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

WRCOG/GSATS Staff Training

All WRCOG/GSATS staff will be provided with the LEP Plan and will be educated on procedures and services available. This information will also be part of the staff orientation process for new hires. Training topics are listed below:

- Understanding the Title VI LEP responsibilities;
- What language assistance services are offered;
- Use of LEP "I Speak Cards";
- How to access a staff interpreter;
- How to use a translation service;
- Documentation of language assistance requests;
- How to handle a complaint; and
- The importance of educating subrecipients on the LEP program responsibilities and the requirement to provide language assistance.

Providing Notice of Available Language Service to LEP Persons

WRCOG/GSATS will post signs that language assistance is available in public areas (such as the reception area) that include:

Outreach Techniques - If staff knows that they will be presenting a topic that could be of potential importance to an LEP person or if staff will be hosting a meeting or a workshop in a geographic location with a known concentration of LEP persons, meeting notices, fliers, advertisements, and agendas may be printed in an alternative language, such as Spanish;

Spanish speaking staff or a hired interpreter will be on hand at public meetings intended for gathering public input upon request; and

WRCOG/GSATS will include the following language availability statement when running a general public meeting notice - *"Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Title VI Coordinator at least 7 working days before the meeting date."*

Identifying a Person Who Needs Language Assistance

Below are tools to help identify persons who may need language assistance:

- WRCOG/GSATS will examine records requests for language assistance from past meetings and events to anticipate the possible need for assistance at upcoming meetings;
- When WRCOG/GSATS sponsors public meetings, workshops or conferences are held, the agency will set up a sign-in sheet table and have a staff member greet and briefly speak to each attendee to informally gauge the attendee's ability to speak and understand English. The staff will ask a question that requires a full sentence reply;
- WRCOG/GSATS will have the Census Bureau's "I Speak Cards" at the meeting, workshop or conference sign-in sheet table. While staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, the cards are an excellent tool to identify language needs for future meetings. Both agencies will also have the cards available at the office reception area; and
- There will also be posted notices of available language assistance at meeting locations.

Language Interpreter

When an interpreter is needed, in person or on the telephone, staff will determine what language is required. If the required language is not available or if a formal interpretation is required, staff shall use a translation service. Staff may be able to interpret informally or assist with written communications and small document translation requests from LEP persons. If not, a translation service shall be used for a fee. Documents can be made available in another language, such as Spanish, upon request.

Persons can also check the WRCOG or GSATS website at www.wrcog.org or www.gsats.org, to see what languages are offered.

Dissemination of the Limited English Proficiency Plan

WRCOG/GSATS will post the LEP Plan on its websites at www.wrcog.org and www.gsats.org. Any person, including social service, non-profit, and law enforcement agencies and other community partners with internet access will be able to access the plan. For those without personal internet service, all County libraries offer free internet access. Copies of the LEP Plan will be provided to the South Carolina and North Carolina Departments of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and any person or agency requesting a copy. Each sub-recipient will be provided a copy and will be educated on the importance of providing language assistance. LEP persons may obtain copies/translations of the plan upon request.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

This plan is designed to be flexible and is one that can be easily updated. At a minimum, WRCOG/GSATS will follow the Title VI Program update schedule for the LEP Plan. The next required Title VI Program update must be forwarded to FTA. Each update should examine all plan components including:

- How many LEP persons were encountered?
- Were their needs met?
- What is the current LEP population in the WRCOG/GSATS area?
- Has there been a change in the types of languages where translation services are needed?

- Is there still a need for continued language assistance for previously identified WRCOG/GSATS programs? Are there other programs that should be included?
- Have the available resources, such as technology, staff, and financial costs changed?
- Has WRCOG/GSATS fulfilled the goals of the LEP Plan? and
- Were any complaints received?

TITLE VI DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is responsible for processing discrimination complaints filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination laws, as they relate to federally funded programs of the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS). Participants and beneficiaries of programs and activities administered by WRCOG/GSATS who feel they have been discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin have a right to file a complaint. Complaints of alleged discrimination will be investigated by the appropriate authority, such as a state or federal agency or the WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Coordinator.

FILING OF COMPLAINTS

Applicability

These complaint procedures apply to programs, activities, and services, including subrecipients and contractors (e.g., subcontractors and consultants) receiving federal or state funds through DOT. **Note:** Title VI does not include internal complaints related to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).

Eligibility

Any person or class of persons who believes he/she has been subjected to discrimination based on race, color, or national origin may file a written complaint with the Title VI Coordinator. The law also prohibits intimidation or retaliation against anyone who files a complaint.

Filing Options and Time Limits

Complaints may be filed by the affected individual(s) or a representative and must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the following:

- The date of the alleged act of discrimination; or
- The date when the person(s) became aware of the alleged discrimination; or
- When there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which that conduct was discontinued or the latest instance of the conduct.

In addition to filing a complaint with the WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Coordinator, a complainant may file a Title VI and related discrimination complaints may be submitted directly to the following entities:

- North Carolina Department of Transportation *Office of Civil Rights, External Civil Rights, 1511 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1511; 919-508-1808 or 800-522-0453*
- South Carolina Department of Transportation *Office of Civil Rights, 955 Park Street, PO Box 191, Columbia, SC 29202, 803-737-6361*
- Federal Highway Administration *North Carolina Division Office, 310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, NC 27601, 919-747-7010*
- Federal Highway Administration *South Carolina Division Office, 1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270, Columbia, SC, 29201, 803-765-5411*
- Federal Transit Administration *Office of Civil Rights, ATTN: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Bldg. 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590*

Format for Complaints

Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s) or a representative, and include the complainant's name, address, and telephone number. Complaints received by fax or e-mail will be acknowledged and processed. Allegations received by telephone will be transcribed and provided to the complainant for confirmation or revision before processing. Complaints will be accepted in other languages, including Braille. (See DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM)

Complaint Basis

Allegations must be based on issues involving race, color, national origin, LEP, income-level, sex, age, disability, or religion. The term "basis" refers to the complainant's membership in a protected group category.

| Protected Categories | Definition | Examples | Pertinent Statutes and Regulations | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | | FHWA | FTA |
| Race | An individual belonging to one of the accepted racial groups; or the perception, based usually on physical characteristics that a person is a member of a racial group | Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White | Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 49 CFR Part 21; 23 CFR 200; <i>(Executive Order 13166)</i> | Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 49 CFR Part 21; Circular 4702.1B; <i>(Executive Order 13166)</i> |
| Color | Color of skin, including shade of skin within a racial group | Black, White, brown, yellow, etc. | Executive Order 12898 | Executive Order 12898 |
| National Origin | Place of birth. Citizenship is not a factor. <i>(Discrimination based on language or a person's accent is also covered)</i> | Mexican, Cuban, Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese; Russian; French | | |

***Note: Religion (or creed) is only protected under Right of Way, Public Transportation, and Aviation programs.**

Complaint Receipt and Response

The Title VI Coordinator will review the complaint to ensure the complaint is timely filed, that required information is provided, and to determine jurisdiction.

The Title VI Coordinator will record the complaint upon receipt on a log sheet maintained by WRCOG/GSATS. The log shall include the following:

- Name of complainant(s)
- Date complaint was received
- Nature of complaint
- Initial/signature of the agency representative handling the complaint

If the complaint is complete and no additional information is needed, the Title VI Coordinator will forward the complaint to the appropriate jurisdiction. If WRCOG/GSATS is the appropriate jurisdiction, the Title VI Coordinator shall complete the review no later than forty-five (45) calendar days after the date the complaint was received. If the jurisdiction falls under a different agency (FHWA, FTA, SCDOT, NCDOT, etc.), it will be forwarded within fifteen (15) calendar days with a cover letter to the appropriate jurisdiction. A copy of the cover letter will be provided concurrently to the complainant to advise them that the complaint was forwarded for investigation.

If the complaint form is incomplete, the complainant will be contacted to obtain the needed information. Failure to respond and/or provide the requested information within fifteen (15) calendar days may be considered good cause for a determination of no investigative merit.

WRCOG/GSATS staff will provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities or who are limited in English proficiency, in filling out the complaint form.

In instances where additional information is needed for assessment or investigation of the complaint, the complainant will be contacted in writing within ten (10) calendar days.

OBTAINING A COMPLAINT FORM

- The Complaint Form can be found in **APPENDIX III**
- The Complaint Form and instruction can also be found on the following websites:

www.wrcog.org

www.gsats.org

- The Complaint Form and instructions can also be obtained at:

**WRCOG Administrative Office
1230 Highmarket Street
Georgetown, SC 29440**

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APPENDIX I

STANDARD U.S. DOT TITLE VI ASSURANCES

The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG)/Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) (hereinafter referred to as the "Recipient") HEREBY AGREES THAT, as a condition to receiving any Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is subject to and will comply with the following:

Statutory/Regulatory Authorities

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (§42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*, 78 stat. 252), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin);

49 C.F.R. Part 21 (*entitled Non-discrimination in Federally-Assisted Programs of the Department of Transportation-Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*);

28 C.F.R. section 50.3 (U.S. Department of Justice Guidelines for Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964),

The preceding statutory and regulatory cites hereinafter are referred to as the "Acts" and "Regulations", respectively.

General Assurances

In accordance with the Acts, the Regulations, and other pertinent directives, circulars, policy, memoranda, and/or guidance, the Recipient hereby gives assurance that it will promptly take any measures necessary to ensure that

"No person in the United States will, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity," for which the Recipient receives Federal financial assistance from the Department of Transportation, including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarified the original intent of Congress, with respect to Title VI and other Non-discrimination requirements (The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), by restoring the broad, institutional-wide scope and coverage of these non-discrimination statutes and requirements to include all programs and activities of the Recipient, so long as any portion of the program is Federally assisted.

Specific Assurances

More specifically, and without limiting the above general Assurance, the Recipient agrees with and gives the following Assurances with respect to its Federally-assisted programs:

The Recipient agrees that each "activity", "facility", or "program", as defined in §§21.23(b) and 21.23(e) of 49 C.F.R. §21 will be (with regard to an "activity") facilitated, or will be (with regard

to a facility (operated, or will be (with regard to a "program") conducted in compliance with all requirements imposed by, or pursuant to the Acts and, the Regulations.

That the Recipient will insert the following notification in all solicitations for bids, Requests for Proposals for work, or material subject to the Acts and the Regulations made in connection with all programs and activities and, in adapted form, in all proposals for negotiated agreements regardless of funding source.

"The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and Grand Strand Area Transportation Study, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C §§2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award."

The Recipient will insert the clauses of Appendix A and E of this Assurance in every contract or agreement subject to the Acts and the Regulations.

The Recipient will insert the clauses of Appendix B of this Assurance, as a covenant running with the land, in any deed from the United States effecting or recording a transfer of real property, structures, use, or improvements thereon, or interest therein to a Recipient.

That where the Recipient receives Federal financial assistance to construct a facility, or part of a facility, the Assurance will extend to the entire facility and facilities operated in connection therewith.

That where the Recipient receives Federal financial assistance in the form, or for the acquisition or real property or an interest in real property, the Assurance will extend to the rights to space on, over, or under such property.

That the Recipient will include the clauses set forth in Appendix C and Appendix D of this Assurance, as a covenant running with the land, in any future deeds, leases, licenses, permits, or similar instruments entered into by the Recipient with other parties:

- For the subsequent transfer of real property acquired or improved under the applicable activity, project, or program; and
- For the construction or use of, or access to, space on, over or under real property acquired, or improved under the applicable activity, project, or program.

That this Assurance obligates the Recipient for the period during which Federal financial assistance is extended to the program, except where the Federal financial assistance is to provide, or is in the form of, personal property, or real property, or interest therein, or structures or improvements thereon, in which case the Assurance obligates the Recipient, or any transferee for the longer of the following periods:

- The period during which the property is used for a purpose for which the Federal financial assistance is extended, or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits; or
- The period during which the Recipient retains ownership or possession of the property.

The Recipient will provide for such methods of administration for the program as are found by the Secretary of Transportation or the official to whom he/she delegates specific authority to give reasonable guarantee that it, other recipients, sub-recipients, sub-grantees, contractors, subcontractors, consultants, transferees, successors in interest, and other participants of Federal financial assistance under such program will comply with all requirements imposed or pursuant to the Acts, the Regulations, and this Assurance.

The Recipient agrees that the United States has a right to seek judicial enforcement with regard to any matter arising under the Acts, the Regulations, and this Assurance.

THIS ASSURANCE is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal grants, loans, contracts, property, discounts or other Federal financial assistance extended after the date hereof to the Recipient by the Department of Transportation under any program or activity and is binding on it, other recipients, sub-grantees, contractors, subcontractors, transferees, successors in interest and other participants. The person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign this Assurance on behalf of the Recipient.

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
Grand Strand Area Transportation Study
(Name of Recipient)

by _____
(Signature of Authorized Official)

Dated _____

SUBPART A

During the performance of this contract, the contractor, for itself, its assignees and successors in interest (hereinafter referred to as the "contractor") agrees as follows:

Compliance with Regulations: The contractor (Hereinafter includes consultants) will comply with the Acts and the Regulations relative to nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as they may be amended from time to time, which are herein incorporated by reference and made a part of this contract.

Non-discrimination: The Contractor, with regard to the work performed by it during the contract, will not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in the selection and retention of subcontractors, including procurements of materials and leases of equipment. The contractor will not participate directly or indirectly in the discrimination prohibited by Acts and the Regulations, including employment practices when the contract covers any activity, project, or program set forth in Appendix B of 49 CFR part 21. This includes FHWA or FTA specific program requirement.

Solicitations for Subcontractors, Including Procurements of Materials and Equipment: In all solicitations, either by competitive bidding or negotiation made by the contractor for work to be performed under a subcontract, including procurements of materials or leases of equipment, each potential subcontractor or supplier will be notified by the contractor of the contractor's obligations under this contract and the Acts and the Regulations relative to Non-discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. This includes FHWA or FTA specific program requirements.

Information and Reports: The contractor will provide all information and reports required by the Acts, the Regulations, and directives issued pursuant thereto and will permit access to its books, records, accounts, other sources of information, and its facilities as may be determined by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments/Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to be pertinent to ascertain compliance with such Acts, Regulations, instructions. Where any information required of a contractor is in the exclusive possession of another who fails or refuses to furnish the information, the contractor will so certify to the WRCOG/GSATS, FHWA or the FTA, as appropriate, and will set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.

Sanctions for Noncompliance: In the event of the contractor's noncompliance with the Non-discrimination provisions of this contract, the WRCOG/GSATS will impose such contract sanctions as it or the FHWA, or FTA may determine to be appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- Withholding of payments to the contractor under the contract until the contractor complies, and/or
- Cancellation, termination or suspension of the contract, in whole or in part.

Incorporation of Provisions: The contractor will include the provisions of paragraphs one (1) through six (6) in every subcontract, including procurements of materials and leases of equipment, unless exempt by the Acts, the Regulations, and directives issued pursuant thereto. The contractor

will take action with respect to any subcontractor procurement as the WRCOG/GSATS, FHWA, or the FTA may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance. Provided, that if the contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor, or supplier because of such direction, the contractor may request the WRCOG/GSATS to enter into any litigation to protect the interests of the WRCOG/GSATS. In addition, the contractor may request the United States to enter into the litigation to protect the interests of the United States.

SUBPART B

Clauses for Deeds Transferring United States Property

The following clauses will be included in deeds effecting or recording the transfer of real property, structures, or improvements thereon, or granting interest therein from the United States pursuant to the provisions of Assurance 4:

NOW, THEREFORE, the U.S. Department of Transportation as authorized by law and upon the condition that the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG)/Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) will accept Title to the lands and maintain the project constructed thereon, in accordance with the appropriate legislative authority, the Regulations for the Administration of its programs and activities, and the policies and procedures prescribed by the FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION or the FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION of the U.S. Department of Transportation in accordance with and in compliance with all requirements imposed by Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, U.S. Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Non-discrimination in federally assisted programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation pertaining to and effectuating the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252; 42 U.S.C. §2000d to 2000d-4), does hereby remise, release, quitclaim and convey unto the SCDOT all the right, title and interest of the U.S. Department of Transportation in and to said lands described in Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof.

(HABENDUM CLAUSE)

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD said lands and interests therein unto WRCOG/GSATS and its successors forever, subject, however, to the covenants, conditions, restrictions and reservations herein contained as follows, which will remain in effect for the period during which the real property or structures are used for a purpose for which Federal financial assistance is extended or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits and will be binding on the WRCOG/GSATS, its successors and assigns.

The WRCOG/GSATS, in consideration or the conveyance of said lands and interests in lands, does hereby covenant and agree as a covenant running with the land for itself, its successors and assigns, that (1) no person will on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination with regard to any facility located wholly or in part on over or under such lands hereby conveyed [,] [and]* (2) that the WRCOG/GSATS will use the lands and interests in lands so conveyed, in compliance with all requirements imposed by or pursuant to Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in federally assisted

programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and as said Regulations and Acts may be amended [, and (3) that in the event of breach of any of the above-mentioned non-discrimination conditions, the Department will have a right to enter or re-enter said lands and facilities on said land, and the above described land and facilities will thereon revert to and become the absolute property of the U.S. Department of Transportation and its assigns as such interest existed prior to this instruction].*

* Reverter clause and related language to be used only when it is determined that such a clause is necessary in order to make clear the purposes of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

SUBPART C

Clauses for Transfer of Real Property Acquired or Improved Under the Activity, Facility, or Program

The following clauses will be included in all deeds, licenses, leases, permits, or similar instruments entered into by the WRCOG/GSATS pursuant to the provisions of Assurance 7(a):

The (grantee, licensee, lessee, permittee, etc., as appropriate) for himself/herself, his/her heirs, personal representatives, successors in interest, and assigns, as a part of the consideration hereof, does hereby covenant and agree [in the case of deeds and leases add "as a covenant running with the land"] that:

In the event facilities are constructed, maintained, or otherwise operated on the said property described in this (deed, license, lease, permit, etc.) for a purpose for which a U.S. Department of Transportation activity, facility, or program is extended or for another purpose involving the provision of similar services or benefits, the (grantee, licensee, lessee, permittee, etc.) will maintain and operate such facilities and services in compliance with all other requirements imposed by the Acts and Regulations (as may be amended) such that no person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the use of said facilities.

With respect to licenses, leases, permits, etc., in the event of a breach of any of the above Non-discrimination covenants, WRCOG/GSATS will have the right to terminate the [lease, license, permit, etc.] and to enter, re-enter, and repossess said land and the facilities thereon, and hold the same as if said [licenses, lease, permit, etc.] had never been made or issued.*

With respect to a deed, in the event of breach of any of the above Non-discrimination covenants, WRCOG/GSATS will have the right to enter or reenter said lands and facilities thereon, and the above described lands and facilities will thereupon revert to and vest in and become the absolute property of WRCOG/GSATS and its assigns.*

* Reverter clause and related language to be used only when it is determined that such a clause is necessary in order to effectuate the purposes of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

SUBPART D

Clauses for Construction/Use/Access to Real Property Acquired Under the Activity, Facility, or Program

The following clauses will be included in all deeds, licenses, leases, permits, or similar instruments entered into by the WRCOG/GSATS pursuant to the provisions of Assurance 7(b):

The grantee, licensee, lessee, permittee, etc., as appropriate for himself/herself, his/her heirs, personal representatives, successors in interest, and assigns, as a part of the consideration hereof, does hereby covenant and agree (in the case of deeds and leases add "as a covenant running with the land") that:

- No person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the use of said facilities,
- In the construction of any improvements on, over, or under such land, and the furnishing of services thereon, no person on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination, and
- The (grantee, licensee, lessee, permittee, etc.) will use the premises in compliance with all other requirements imposed by or pursuant to the Acts and Regulations, as amended, set forth in this Assurance.

With respect to (licenses, leases, permits, etc.), in the event of breach of any of the above Non-discrimination covenants, WRCOG/GSATS will have the right to terminate the (license, permit, etc., as appropriate) and enter or re-enter and repossess said land and the facilities thereon, and hold the same as if said (license, permit, etc., as appropriate) had never been made or issued.*

With respect to deeds, in the event of breach of any of the above Non-discrimination covenants, WRCOG/GSATS will have the right to enter or re-enter said lands and facilities thereon, and the above described lands and facilities will thereupon revert to and vest in and become the absolute property of WRCOG/GSATS and its assigns.*

* Reverter clause and related language to be used only when it is determined that such a clause is necessary in order to effectuate the purposes of Title VI.

SUBPART E

Pertinent Non-Discrimination Authorities:

During the performance of this contract, the contractor, for itself, its assignees, and successors in interest (hereinafter referred to as the "contractor") agrees to comply with the following non-discrimination statutes and authorities, including but not limited to:

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 28000 *et seq.*, 78 stat. 252), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin); and 49 CFR Part 21;

The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, (42 U.S.C. §4601) Prohibits unfair treatment of persons displaced or whose property has been acquired because of Federal or Federal-aid programs and projects;

The Federal-aid Highway Act of 1973, (23 U.S.C. §324 *et seq.*), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex);

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (29 U.S.C. 794 *et seq.*), as amended, (prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability); and 49 CFR Part 27;

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §6101 *et seq.*), (prohibits discrimination on the basis of age);

Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982, (42 U.S.C. §47123), as amended, (prohibits discrimination on race, creed, color, national origin, or sex);

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, (P.L. 100-209), (Broadened, the scope, coverage and applicability of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, by expanding the definition of the terms "programs or activities" to include all of the programs or activities of the Federal-aid recipients, sub-recipients and contractors, whether such programs or activities are Federally funded or not);

Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in the operation of public entities, public and private transportation systems, places of public accommodation, and certain testing entities (42 U.S.C. §§12131-12189) as implemented by Department of Transportation regulations at 49 CFR Parts 37 and 38;

The Federal Aviation Administration's Non-discrimination statute (49 U.S.C. §47123) (prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, and sex);

Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, which ensures nondiscrimination by discouraging programs, policies, and activities with disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations;

Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, and resulting agency guidance, national origin discrimination includes discrimination because of limited English proficiency (LEP). To ensure compliance, recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to programs (70 Fed. Reg. at 74087 to 74100);

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities (20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*).

APPENDIX II

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The paragraph below will be inserted into all significant publications that are distributed to the public. The text will be placed on the agency's website. The version below is the preferred text, but where space is limited or in publications where cost is an issue, the abbreviated version can be used in its place.

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the WRCOG or GSATS receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with WRCOG or GSATS. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the Title VI Coordinator within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discriminatory Complaint Form, please see our website at: www.wrcog.org or www.gsats.org, or call (843)546-8502.

A complaint may be filed with the WRCOG Administrative Office Title VI Coordinator at the following address:

WRCOG

Attn: Title VI Coordinator

1230 Highmarket Street

Georgetown, SC 29440

A complaint may be filed at any time with the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights at the following addresses:

Office of Civil Rights

Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator

East Building, 5th Floor-TCR

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20590

Federal Highway Administration

Attn: Title VI Coordinator

1200 New Jersey Avenue

Washington, DC 20590

A shortened version of the above paragraph, such as the example below, may be used in publications where space or cost is an issue:

WRCOG and GSATS fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please visit our website at: www.wrcog.org or www.gsats.org, or call (843)546-8502.



TITLE VI NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The paragraph below will be inserted into all significant publications that are distributed to the public. The text will be placed on the agency's website. The version below is the preferred text, but where space is limited or in publications where cost is an issue, the abbreviated version can be used in its place.

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the WRCOG or GSATS receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with WRCOG or GSATS. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the Title VI Coordinator within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discriminatory Complaint Form, please see our website at: www.wrcog.org or www.gsats.org, or call (843)546-8502.

A complaint may be filed with the WRCOG Administrative Office Title VI Coordinator at the following address:

***WRCOG
Attn: Title VI Coordinator
1230 Highmarket Street
Georgetown, SC 29440***

A complaint may be filed at any time with the Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights at the following addresses:

***Office of Civil Rights
Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor-TCR
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590***

***Federal Highway Administration
Attn: Title VI Coordinator
1200 New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590***

APPENDIX III

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Introduction

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is responsible for processing discrimination complaints filed under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination laws, as they relate to federally funded programs of the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS). Participants and beneficiaries of programs and activities administered by WRCOG/GSATS who feel they have been discriminated against based on race, color, or national origin have a right to file a complaint. Complaints of alleged discrimination will be investigated by the appropriate authority, such as a State or Federal agency or the WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Coordinator.

Filing of Complaints

1. **Applicability.** These complaint procedures apply to programs, activities, and services, including subrecipients and contractors (e.g., subcontractors and consultants) receiving federal or state funds through DOT. **Note:** Title VI does not include internal complaints related to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO).
2. **Eligibility.** Any person or class of persons who believes he/she has been subjected to discrimination based on race, color, or national origin may file a written complaint with the Title VI Coordinator. The law also prohibits intimidation or retaliation against anyone who files a complaint.
3. **Filing Options and Time Limits.** Complaints may be filed by the affected individual(s) or a representative and must be filed no later than 180 calendar days after the following:
 - The date of the alleged act of discrimination; or
 - The date when the person(s) became aware of the alleged discrimination; or
 - When there has been a continuing course of conduct, the date on which that conduct was discontinued or the latest instance of the conduct.

In addition to filing a complaint with the WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Coordinator, a complainant may file a Title VI and related discrimination complaints may be submitted directly to the following entities:

- North Carolina Department of Transportation *Office of Civil Rights, External Civil Rights, 1511 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1511; 919-508-1808 or 800-522-0453*
- South Carolina Department of Transportation *Office of Civil Rights, 955 Park Street, PO Box 191, Columbia, SC 29202, 803-737-6361*
- Federal Highway Administration *North Carolina Division Office, 310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410, Raleigh, NC 27601, 919-747-7010*
- Federal Highway Administration *South Carolina Division Office, 1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270, Columbia, SC, 29201, 803-765-5411*
- Federal Transit Administration *Office of Civil Rights, ATTN: Title VI Program Coordinator, East Bldg. 5th Floor – TCR, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20590*

4. **Format for Complaints.** Complaints must be in writing and signed by the complainant(s) or a representative, and include the complainant's name, address, and telephone number. Complaints received by fax or e-mail will be acknowledged and processed. Allegations received by telephone will be transcribed and provided to the complainant for confirmation or revision before processing. Complaints will be accepted in other languages, including Braille. (See DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM)
5. **Complaint Basis.** Allegations must be based on issues involving race, color, or national origin. The term "basis" refers to the complainant's membership in a protected group category.

| Protected Categories | Definition | Examples | Pertinent Statutes and Regulations | |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | FHWA | FTA |
| Race | An individual belonging to one of the accepted racial groups; or the perception, based usually on physical characteristics that a person is a member of a racial group | Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White | Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 49 CFR Part 21; 23 CFR 200; (Executive Order 13166) | Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 49 CFR Part 21; Circular 4702.1B; (Executive Order 13166) |
| Color | Color of skin, including shade of skin within a racial group | Black, White, brown, yellow, etc. | Executive Order 12898 | Executive Order 12898 |
| National Origin | Place of birth. Citizenship is not a factor. | Mexican, Cuban, Japanese, Vietnamese, Chinese; Russian; French | | |

***Note: Religion (or creed) is only protected under Right of Way, Public Transportation, and Aviation programs.**

Complaint Receipt and Response

1. The Title VI Coordinator will review the complaint to ensure the complaint is timely filed, that required information is provided, and to determine jurisdiction.
2. The Title VI Coordinator will record the complaint upon receipt on a log sheet maintained by WRCOG/GSATS. The log shall include the following:
 - Name of complainant(s)
 - Date complaint was received
 - Nature of complaint
 - Initial/signature of the agency representative handling the complaint
3. If the complaint is complete and no additional information is needed, the Title VI Coordinator will forward the complaint to the appropriate jurisdiction. If WRCOG/GSATS is the appropriate jurisdiction, the Title VI Coordinator shall complete the review no later than forty-five (45) calendar days after the date the complaint was received. If the jurisdiction falls under a different agency (FHWA, FTA, SCDOT, NCDOT, etc.), it will be forwarded within fifteen (15) calendar days with a cover letter to the appropriate jurisdiction. A copy of the cover letter will be provided concurrently to the complainant to advise them that the complaint was submitted for investigation.
4. If the complaint is incomplete, you will be contacted to obtain the needed information. Failure to respond and/or provide the requested information within fifteen (15) calendar days may be considered good cause for a determination of no investigative merit.

5. WRCOG/GSATS staff will provide appropriate assistance to complainants, including those persons with disabilities or who are limited in English proficiency, in filling out the complaint form.
6. In instances where additional information is needed for assessment or investigation of the complaint, the complainant will be contacted in writing within ten (10) calendar days.

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT FORM



Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
Grand Strand Area Transportation Study

Any person who believes that he/she has been subjected to discrimination based upon race, color, or national origin may file a written complaint with Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and/or Grand Strand Area Transportation Study, within 180 days after the discrimination occurred.

| | | |
|------------|-------------|----------------|
| Last Name: | First Name: | Male Female |
|------------|-------------|----------------|

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|--------|------|
| Mailing Address: | City: | State: | Zip: |
|------------------|-------|--------|------|

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Home Telephone: | Work Telephone: | E-mail Address: |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|

Identify the Category of Discrimination:

☐ RACE ☐ COLOR ☐ NATIONAL ORIGIN

Identify the Race of the Complainant:

☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian American
☐ American Indian ☐ Alaskan Native ☐ Pacific Islander Other _____

Date and place of alleged discriminatory action(s). Please include earliest date of discrimination and most recent date of discrimination.

List the names of individuals responsible for the discriminatory action(s).

How were you discriminated against? Describe the nature of the action, decision, or conditions of the alleged discrimination. Explain as clearly as possible what happened and why you believe your protected status (basis) was a factor in the discrimination. Include how other persons were treated differently from you. (**Attach additional page(s), if necessary**)

The law prohibits intimidation or **retaliation** against anyone because he/she has either taken action, or participated in action, to secure rights protected by these laws. If you feel you have been retaliated against, separate from the discrimination alleged above, please explain the circumstances below. Explain what action you took which you believe was the cause for the alleged retaliation. (**Attach additional page(s), if necessary**)

List the names of persons (witnesses, fellow employees, supervisors, or others) whom we may contact for additional information to support or clarify your complaint. (**Attached additional page(s), if necessary**)

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Address</u> | <u>Telephone</u> |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|
|-------------|----------------|------------------|

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ |

Have you filed, or intend to file, a complaint regarding the matter raised with any of the following? If yes, please provide the filing dates. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Federal Highway Administration _____
- ☐ Federal Transit Administration _____
- ☐ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration _____
- ☐ US Department of Transportation _____
- ☐ Federal or State Court _____
- ☐ Other _____

Have you discussed the complaint with any WRCOG or GSATS representative? If yes, provide the name, position, and date of discussion.

Please provide any additional information that you believe would assist with an investigation.

Briefly explain what remedy, or action, you are seeking for the alleged discrimination.

**** PLEASE SIGN AND DATE THE COMPLAINT FORM BELOW. THE TITLE VI COORDINATOR CAN ONLY PROCESS SIGNED COMPLAINT FORMS.****

COMPLAINANT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

MAIL COMPLAINT FORM TO:

WACCAMAW REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
ATTN: TITLE VI COORDINATOR
1230 HIGHMARKET STREET
GEORGETOWN, SC 29440
PHONE: 843-546-8502 WEBSITE: WRCOG.ORG

Date Complaint Received: _____

Processed by: _____

Case #: _____

Referred to: SCDOT NCDOT FHWA FTA

Other: _____ Date Referred: _____

APPENDIX IV
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



GRAND STRAND TRANSPORTATION STUDY AND WACCAMAW REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

| REVISION NUMBER | RURAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE | TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE | TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE | STUDY TEAM | BOARD OF DIRECTORS | POLICY COMMITTEE | PUBLIC REVIEW & COMMENT |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | | | | | | | |
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STAFF REVIEW
09/25/2020

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The terms used in this plan have the meanings as prescribed below. Where terms are not defined, reference should be made to the definitions contained within the governing federal law or Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines.

Administrative Modification - A correction or update to the Transportation Improvement Program or other MPO or RPO planning process that does not require Policy Committee approval or additional public involvement. Corrections do not include the addition or removal of projects, significant changes in project scope, or significant changes in cost. In determining whether a proposed change would constitute an amendment or correction, reference should be made to the latest DOT guidance. For TIP amendments or modifications (South Carolina), reference should be made to SCDOT guidance published on March 25, 2014 or the latest revision.

Amendment - A significant change to the adopted Public Participation Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Improvement Program, Congestion Management Process, or Unified Planning Work Program. Amendments require additional opportunities for public involvement and approval by the Policy Committee.

Annual List of Obligated Projects (ALOP)

Congestion Management Process (CMP) - A planning process required for Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) that seeks to locally define and assess the significance of congestion, formulates management strategies, and develops multimodal performance measures.

Department of Transportation (DOT) - This term includes the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT), and all agencies and divisions thereof.

Environmental Justice - A federal policy that protects minority and low-income populations from experiencing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of federally-funded programs, policies, and activities.

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) - The transportation act that had included additional requirements to those set forth in MAP-21.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) - The USDOT agency that oversees the distribution of federal funds for the activities pertaining to road systems in each state.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) - The USDOT agency that oversees the distribution of federal funds for transit activities in each state.

Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) - The GSATS Policy Committee is the MPO for portions of Horry and Georgetown counties in South Carolina and the southeastern portion of Brunswick County in North Carolina.

Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - A long range transportation plan resulting from collaboration and consensus that serves as the defining vision for the area's transportation system. The plan indicates the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next twenty (20) years and provides both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system in the rural planning area.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - A regional policy body, required in urbanized areas with populations over 50,000, and designated by local officials and the governor(s) of the affected state(s). MPOs, in cooperation with state(s) and other transportation providers, are responsible for carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) - A long range transportation plan resulting from collaboration and consensus that serves as the defining vision for the area's transportation system. The plan indicates the transportation improvements scheduled for funding over the next twenty (20) years and provides both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system in the urban planning area.

Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) - The transportation act that replaced SAFETEA-LU.

Policy Committee - GSATS' governing board which is made up of twenty-four (24) members with representation from area jurisdictions, NCDOT, SCDOT, and public transit providers.

Rural Policy Committee - RPO's governing board. The WRCOG Board of Directors serves as the Rural Policy Committee.

Rural Planning Work Program - The RPWP is the management plan for the rural planning area. It provides a description of tasks and required coordination activities to be undertaken by the rural transportation planning program.

Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) - A document prepared by SCDOT in coordination with the RPO's and MPOs that lists projects to be funded with FHWA/FTA funds for the next seven (7) or more years.

Study Area - The geographic area in which the metropolitan planning process required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and section 8 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607) must be carried out. The urban study area is also called the Metropolitan Planning Area and the rural study area is called the Rural Planning Area.

Study Team - A technical advisory committee that makes recommendations to the GSATS Policy Committee. The Study Team is composed of planning directors, city administrators, and other non-elected officials from the South Carolina portion of the study area.

Rural Planning Organization (RPO) - A regional policy body, required in rural planning areas and designated by local officials and the governor(s) of the affected state(s). RPOs, in cooperation with state(s) and other transportation providers, are responsible for carrying out the long range transportation planning requirements of federal highway and transit legislation. The WRCOG serves as the RPO for the three-county region.

Rural Technical Committee (RTC) - A technical advisory committee that makes recommendations to the Rural Planning Area Policy Committee. The RTC is composed of planning directors, city administrators, and other non-elected officials from the rural planning study area.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) - A technical advisory committee that makes recommendations to the TAC. The TCC is composed of planning directors, town administrators, and other non-elected officials from the North Carolina portion of the study area.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) - An advisory committee consisting of elected and appointed officials that makes recommendations to the Policy Committee on issues impacting the North Carolina portion of the study area.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - A document prepared by the MPO in coordination with the state that lists projects in the urbanized area to be funded with FHWA/FTA funds for the next seven (7) or more years. A **Rural TIP** is prepared by rural planning to identify projects in the rural planning area.

Title VI - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act prohibits discrimination in any program receiving federal assistance.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - The UPWP is the management plan for the MPO. It provides a description of tasks and required coordination activities to be undertaken by the transportation planning program.

INTRODUCTION

GSATS

The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study's (GSATS) policy is to support and encourage public participation and to adhere to the principles of Environmental Justice in the metropolitan planning process. GSATS' public participation policy is designed to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the decision-making process.

The processes and guidance provided by this plan are presented as the minimum activities and standards that GSATS will employ to facilitate public participation. Where warranted, the GSATS Policy Committee or the MPO Director may provide for additional measures, i.e. public meetings in excess of the minimum, extended comments periods, notifications, et cetera, when warranted to maximize opportunities for public involvement.

Background

The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study was formed in 1985 to provide a forum for the coordination of regional transportation efforts in northeastern coastal South Carolina. In 1992, GSATS was designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Myrtle Beach Urbanized Area (UZA). The UZA was later renamed the Myrtle Beach – Socastee SC/NC UZA and, in 2013, GSATS' Study Area was expanded to include portions of southern Brunswick County, North Carolina. Geographically, the study area now extends from the Lockwood Folly River in North Carolina to the City of Georgetown in South Carolina. From the Atlantic Ocean, the study area extends westward to include the US 701 corridor and City of Conway in South Carolina and the US 17 corridor and Town of Shallotte in North Carolina. The study area is illustrated on Map Exhibit 1.

The principal responsibilities of the MPO include the development of a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and related planning studies and projects deemed necessary to address transportation issues in the study area. Local transportation needs are re-evaluated annually. Based on this evaluation, project priorities are established and made part of the GSATS TIP. This information is forwarded to the department of transportation for the applicable state for inclusion into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

By federal law, all multi-modal transportation improvement projects must be included in and consistent (to the maximum extent feasible) with the LRTP in order to be eligible for federal funding. As such, the LRTP is the primary plan that guides all federally funded transportation improvements in the study area.

GSATS' primary decision making body is the Policy Committee. The committee consists of twenty-four (24) members representing Myrtle Beach, North Myrtle Beach, Surfside Beach, Conway, Georgetown, Atlantic Beach, Briarcliffe Acres, Pawleys Island, Horry County, Georgetown County, the Horry County Legislative Delegation, the Georgetown County Legislative Delegation, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, the Waccamaw

Regional Transportation Authority, Brunswick County, the North Carolina Transportation Advisory Committee (NCTAC), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. This Board meets regularly to establish transportation policies and evaluate transportation needs for the region.

The work of the Policy Committee is supported by three (3) standing committees: the GSATS South Carolina Study Team (Study Team), the GSATS North Carolina Technical Coordinating Committee (NCTCC), and the GSATS North Carolina Transportation Advisory Committee (NCTAC). The Study Team and NCTCC are made up of state, county, and city planning, engineering, and administrative staff which provide technical expertise in the development of transportation plans and programs for the study area. The NCTAC is composed of primarily elected officials from the North Carolina member jurisdictions which provide guidance and make recommendations to the Policy Committee. For select issues impacting the North Carolina portion of the study area, the NCTAC may exercise decision making authority for the MPO. Each Committee may also appoint ad hoc committees (working groups) to oversee MPO planning projects or studies.

The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) is a public agency created by the counties of Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg as enabled by the South Carolina Code of Laws. The agency was organized in 1969 and has been providing planning, management, and technical assistance to its member governments and local transit service providers since its inception. WRCOG serves as the lead planning and administrative agency for the MPO and provides necessary support staff. The MPO staff consists of a director, professional planners, and support personnel. Routinely, the committees, along with the MPO staff, provide recommendations to the Policy Committee regarding short and long range planning, implementation of projects, and related issues.

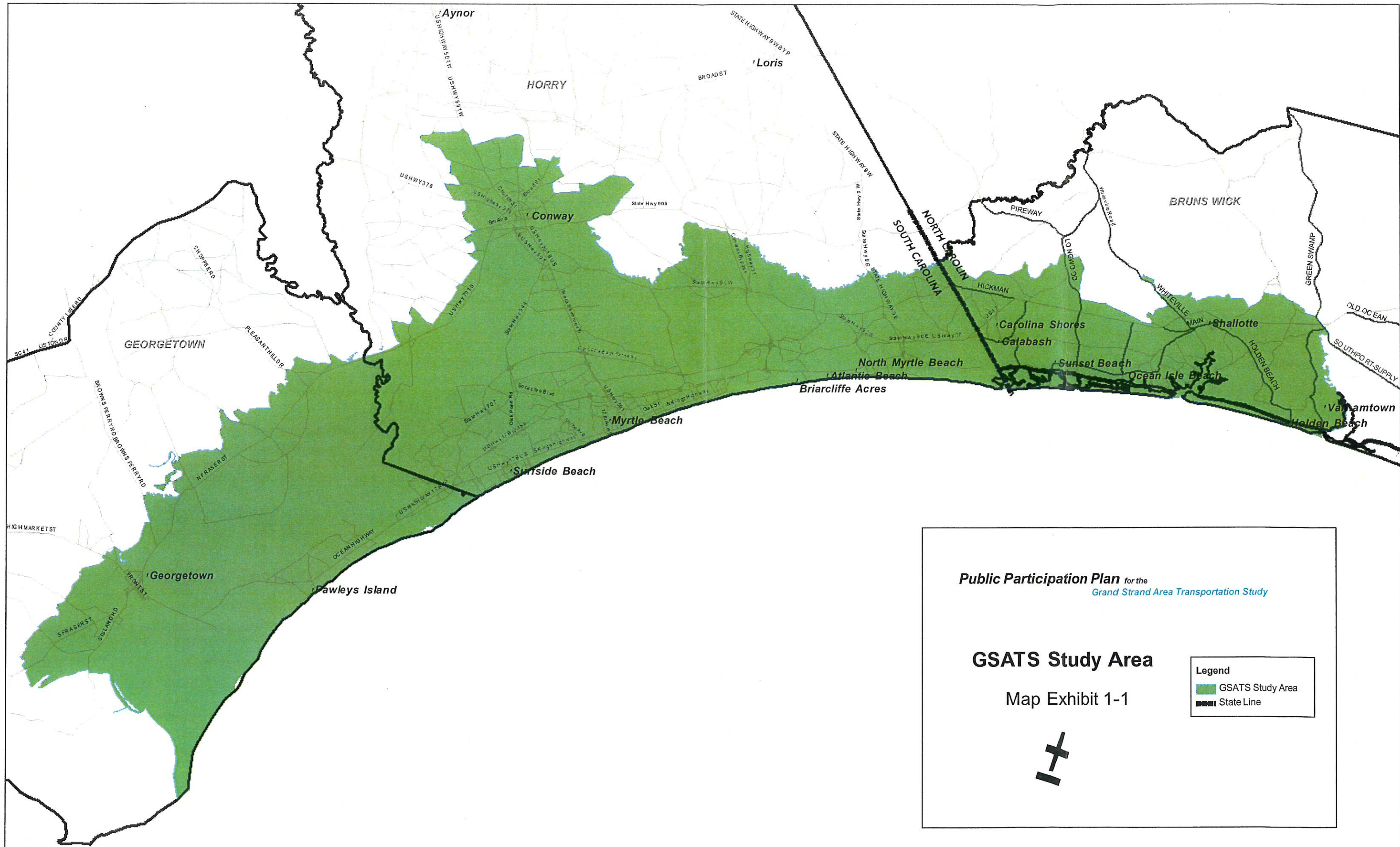
WRCOG

The Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) Rural Planning Organization's (RPO) policy is to support and encourage public participation and to adhere to the principles of Environmental Justice in the rural planning process. The Public Participation Plan (PPP) describes how WRCOG will disseminate information regarding the rural transportation program. The RPO's public participation policy is designed to ensure opportunities for the public to express its views on transportation issues and to become active participants in the decision-making process.

Background

WRCOG is a regional public agency created by Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg counties, as enabled by state planning law. The agency provides planning, management, and technical assistance to its member governments and local transit service providers. South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) has designated WRCOG to serve as the RPO for the three-county region. The RPO is responsible for staffing the area-wide transportation planning organization.

WRCOG's primary decision making body is the Board of Directors, which also serves as the Policy Committee for the RPO. The Board is comprised of twenty-five (25) members representing the local governments in the WRCOG region. This Board meets regularly to establish policies and evaluate the needs for the region. The rural transportation program work of the Board is supported



Public Participation Plan for the
Grand Strand Area Transportation Study

GSATS Study Area

Map Exhibit 1-1

Legend

- GSATS Study Area
- State Line



The RPO technical staff consists of professional planners and administrative staff. The RTC is made up of state, county, and city planning and engineering staff, which provide technical expertise in the development of transportation plans and programs for the rural area. On an ongoing basis the RPO staff and RTC provide recommendations to the Board regarding short and long range planning, implementation of projects, and related issues. The Board may also appoint ad hoc committees (working groups) to oversee rural planning projects or studies. The Board and RTC operate under RPO bylaws approved by the Board.

The principal responsibilities of the RPO include the development and maintenance of a Rural Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP), a Rural Transportation Improvement Program (Rural TIP), a Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP), and related planning studies and projects deemed necessary to address transportation issues in the RPO area. Local transportation needs in the rural area are re-evaluated annually, and based on this evaluation, project priorities are established and made part of the Rural TIP. This information is forwarded to SCDOT for inclusion into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

By federal law, all multi-modal transportation improvement projects must be included in and be consistent with (to the maximum extent feasible) the RPO's RL RTP in order to be eligible for federal funding. Therefore, the RPO RL RTP is the primary plan that guides all federally funded transportation improvements in the rural area.

GOVERNMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

PLANNING FACTORS

Based on federal guidance, transportation planning at the statewide level should incorporate or consider various factors or objectives. The most recent transportation act, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, retains the eight (8) planning factors contained in the previous MAP 21 transportation act and has added two (2) factors to consider. These include:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan 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 for 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 resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts on surface transportation; and
10. Enhance travel and tourism.

In addition to pursuing the ten (10) planning factors, PROs and MPOs are required to develop and adopt a long-range transportation plan, a transportation improvement program, and performance measures for safety and bridge/road conditions. In developing these documents, by federal statute, a reasonable opportunity for the public to comment must be provided.

Federal law also requires that MPOs and RPOs develop and implement processes for encouraging public participation. These requirements are found in 23 CFR 450.316 and include:

- Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
- Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
- Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
- Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
- Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

- Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
- Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
- Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the RPO or MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;
- Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes; and
- Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.

ACCESSIBILITY AND NONDISCRIMINATION

Several laws and executive orders have a direct bearing on transportation planning and the need for a proactive public participation process. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) provides that “no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity.” MPOs must ensure that sites for public participation and related meetings are accessible.
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, along with subsequent legislation, provides that “no person shall on the grounds of race, color, and national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funds. The entire institution, whether educational, private, or governmental must comply with Title VI and related federal civil rights laws, not just the program or activity receiving federal funds.”
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994, states that “each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.”
- Executive Order 13155, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, 2000, requires that the recipients of federal financial aid must ensure that the programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to persons with limited English proficiency.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The GSATS/WRCOG PPP is intended to provide direction for public participation activities to be conducted by the MPO and RPO. The PPP contains the vision, goals, objectives, and techniques used by GSATS and WRCOG for public participation. GSATS and WRCOG will strive to:

- Provide timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agencies, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdictional concerns);
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the long range transportation plans, TIPs, planning work programs, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects, and conduct open public meetings where matters related to transportation programs are being considered. Such access would also include, if necessary, the conversion of the key planning documents into Spanish (or other languages);
- Provide adequate public notice of public participation activities and allow time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to, the approval of the long range transportation plans, TIPs, planning work programs, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects. If the final draft of any transportation plan differs significantly or raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen, there shall be an additional opportunity for public comment;
- Respond in writing to all applicable public input. When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft transportation plan (including the financial plan) as a result of the public participation process, a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made part of the final plan;
- Solicit the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, minorities, elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, and low-income households;
- Provide a public comment period of forty-five (45) calendar days prior to the adoption of the Public Participation Plan for the groups listed in Item 1 above. Notice of the 45-day comment period will be advertised on the GSATS and WRCOG websites, at the public libraries, in a newspaper of general circulation, minority community publications, or radio announcement prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period. Notice will also be sent to the MPO and RPO mailing lists prior to the commencement of the 45-day comment period;

- Provide a public comment period of not less than thirty (30) calendar days prior to final adoption of the long range transportation plans, TIPs, planning work programs, Transit Development Plans, any amendments or updates, and other appropriate transportation plans and projects;
- Coordinate the MPO and RPO public participation process with statewide public participation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans and programs, and reduce redundancies and costs;
- Periodically review the public participation process to ensure it provides full and open access to all. Portions of the process which are found not to meet the needs of the constituency will be revised; and,

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN VISION, GOALS & POLICIES

The vision for the public participation plan is that the public will be provided thorough information on transportation planning services and project development in a convenient and timely manner. To this end, the following goals and policies have been established.

Goal 1: To actively engage the public in the transportation planning process according to the policies contained in federal and state law as well as in this Public Participation Plan.

- A. GSATS and WRCOG shall maintain a database of contacts including, at a minimum, the following persons:
 - a. Federal, state, and local agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, and historic preservation;
 - b. Elected officials;
 - c. Local government staff;
 - d. Transportation agencies (freight, port, airports, transit, etc.);
 - e. Representatives of users of public transportation;
 - f. Representatives of users of pedestrian and bicycle transportation;
 - g. Representatives of the disabled;
 - h. Local media;
 - i. Home owners associations;
 - j. Civic groups;
 - k. Special interest groups;
 - l. GSATS and WRCOG area public libraries (for public display); and
 - m. Individuals expressing an interest in transportation planning activities.
- B. GSATS and WRCOG shall electronically send and/or mail meeting announcements (invitations) to the RPO or MPO mailing list or to targeted groups notifying them of upcoming activities.
- C. GSATS and WRCOG may employ visualization techniques to depict transportation plans. Examples of visualization techniques include: charts, graphs, photo interpretation, maps, use of GIS, artist's renderings, physical models, and/or computer simulation.

Goal 2: GSATS and WRCOG shall keep the public informed of on-going transportation related activities through the following methods:

- A. GSATS and WRCOG shall make all information and publications relating to the transportation program available to the public via the RPO or MPO website.
- B. Staff shall be available to provide general and project-specific information at a central location during normal business hours and after hours, at the request of interested groups, with reasonable notice.
- C. GSATS and WRCOG shall maintain a transportation section on the GSATS and WRCOG websites.
 - a. The website shall be updated and maintained to provide the most current information available.
 - b. The website shall, at a minimum, contain the following information:
 - Current Technical Staff contact information (i.e. name, title, mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail);
 - Meeting calendars and agendas;
 - Brief descriptions of current projects;
 - Work products and publications (TIP, long range transportation plans, planning work program, Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan, Bylaws, and PPP); and
 - Links to related agencies (e.g. SCDOT, NCDOT, Transit Operators).

Goal 3: GSATS and WRCOG shall encourage the participation of all citizens in the transportation planning process.

- A. Target audiences shall be identified for each planning study conducted by the RPO or MPO, including residents, business and property owners, and those traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households within the study area.
- B. GSATS and WRCOG shall, whenever feasible, hold public meetings at a scheduled time, location, and building facility convenient to potentially affected citizens.
- C. GSATS and WRCOG will provide an additional opportunity for public comments if the final long range transportation plans or TIPs differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for public comment.

Goal 4: GSATS and WRCOG shall strive to continuously improve public participation.

- A. GSATS and WRCOG shall continuously evaluate public participation techniques according to the procedures contained in this Public Participation Plan.
- B. The Public Participation Plan shall be reviewed and adopted, revised if necessary, at least every three (3) years.

Goal 5: GSATS and WRCOG shall participate in public participation activities for individual transportation improvement projects from the planning phase through construction.

- A. GSATS and WRCOG shall actively assist SCDOT, local governments, and transportation agencies in the development and implementation of public participation techniques for planning and other studies, including major investment studies, project development, and environmental studies.

CURRENT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

Public participation is an ongoing activity of the MPO and RPO. An effective public participation process is characterized by techniques and procedures that enable citizens to become well informed. This section contains descriptions of public participation tools of which GSATS and WRCOG currently uses and may use in the future. These tools are as follows:

Public Informational Meetings

Description: Public meetings are generally open and informal, with project team members interacting with the public on a one-on-one basis. Short presentations may be given at these meetings. The purpose of public informational meetings is to provide project information to the public and to solicit public comment.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, project priority process, certification review, long range plan updates, and other major RPO or MPO activities.

Charrettes

Description: Charrettes are typically intense, possibly multi-day meetings involving local government officials, planning officials, and local residents. A charrette is instrumental in identifying key issues early, promotes joint ownership of the solution, and attempts to diffuse traditional confrontation between stakeholders.

Activities: Project specific meetings, corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, and workshops.

Small Group Meetings

Description: During projects such as planning studies, meetings are held with small groups that have an interest in the project. Meetings could be with homeowners or neighborhood associations, civic groups, special interest groups, or other groups of affected or interested parties.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, and other RPO or MPO activities.

Consultation

Description: Consistent with FAST Act regulations, consultation encourages more cooperative planning between GSATS or WRCOG and appropriate agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities that are affected by transportation within the RPO or MPO areas. To coordinate the planning function to the maximum extent practicable, such consultation will entail comparing long range transportation plans and TIPs as they are developed with the plans, maps, inventories, and planning documents developed by other agencies. This consultation will include, as appropriate, contact with the following groups: state, local, Indian Tribal, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, consideration, and historic preservation. Other citizens, representatives, or agencies interested in being included in the consultation may contact GSATS or WRCOG.

Activities: Public hearings/meetings, copies of this plan on the GSATS or WRCOG websites (for viewing/downloading purposes), and meetings with staff.

Website

Description: The **MPO** website address is www.gsats.org. The site provides basic information about the MPO process, GSATS' members, transportation planning process, and contact information. MPO publications and work products (UPWP, TIP, MTP, CMP, PPP, Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan, and ALOP) are available for downloading from this site. Recent Policy Committee minutes, agendas, and meeting notices, and interactive maps are also available for downloading. On certain projects, citizens are able to submit comments. A link to the GSATS website can also be found on the WRCOG website under "Transportation Planning". The website address is www.wrcog.org/transportation-planning/.

The **RPO** website is found within WRCOG's website, under the drop down menu "Planning" then "Transportation." The site provides basic information about the RPO process, transportation planning process, and contact information. RPO publications and work products (RPWP, Rural TIP, RL RTP, PPP, Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan, and ALOP) are available for downloading from this site. On certain projects, citizens are able to submit comments. The site is maintained and updated by WRCOG staff. The website address is www.wrcog.org/transportation-planning/rpo.org.

Activities: The sites are used to promote regular and special meetings, planning studies, publications, and work products.

Master Database

Description: Staff maintains an ongoing master database with committee membership lists and lists of individuals with a special interest in WRCOG and GSTAS activities. The database includes names, mailing information, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Activities: The database generates distribution lists used to inform the public about public participation opportunities.

Direct Mailings/Email Announcements/Interactive Message Boards

Description: Direct Mailings (letters, postcards, fliers, etc.) are used to announce upcoming meetings or activities or to provide information to a targeted area, group of people, or the media. An area may be identified for a direct mailing because of potential impacts from a project. Groups that have an interest in a specific issue, such as cyclists and pedestrians may be targeted for pathways and trail projects.

Meeting announcements and RPO or MPO information are also emailed to interested persons that have submitted their email addresses to staff. Interactive message boards may be used to facilitate discussion and solicit public comment regarding specific transportation issues.

Activities: Project-specific meetings, workshops, open houses, corridor studies, small-area studies, other planning studies, or major activities.

Display Ads

Description: These ads are used to promote meetings that are not regularly scheduled, such as corridor study workshops. They are published in the local section of the newspaper in order to reach a larger audience than those that typically read legal ads.

Activities: Project specific meetings, workshops, open houses or hearings.

Legal Advertisements

Description: SCDOT requires a minimum thirty (30) day advertisement of any public meeting where a decision could be made that would make a significant change to an existing plan or program. Ads are published to solicit public comment and/or review of the requested change or plan update. The ads provide a description of the meeting agenda, including contact information.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, project priority process, major TIP amendments, updates of the long range plans, planning work programs, and other major RPO or MPO activities.

Public Notices

Description: The MPO advertises public comment periods and notices for all GSATS Policy Committee meetings. The WRCOG Board of Directors meeting schedule is published on an annual basis.

Activities: Regular monthly meetings and other public meetings.

Visualization

Description: GSATS and WRCOG recognize that an important element to public participation is to provide the public, when possible, visual as well as written descriptions of transportation projects. Through visual imagery, the complex features of proposed transportation plans, policies, and programs can be portrayed at appropriate scales (region, local, project architecture, etc.) and from different points of view. To this end, GSATS and WRCOG will utilize various visual and architectural design techniques, some of which may include: sketches, drawings, artist renderings, aerial photography, mapping, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled images, interactive geographical information system (GIS), GIS-based scenario planning tools, photo manipulation, and computer simulation.

Activities: Planning Studies, TIP amendments, and other RPO or MPO activities.

Title VI & Environmental Justice Review

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and activities on the basis of race, color, and national origin. In 1994, Presidential Executive Order 12898 directed every federal agency to make Environmental Justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on "minority populations and low-income populations." In complying with the aforementioned federal laws and policies, the Environmental Justice initiatives will strive to involve the potentially affected public. This effort develops partnerships and enhances the participation with groups and individuals of "traditionally underserved" communities in the transportation planning process. These

communities include minorities, low-income, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Staff activities include, but are not limited to, staff participation in groups and coalitions serving within these communities, targeted communications with local media outlets, conducting meetings at times and locations that are accessible to transit dependent or non-driving individuals when possible, and publication of MPO and RPO documents in non-technical, accessible formats when needed. The goal of the RPO's is to ensure that all citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, income status, national origin, age, or gender have an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

Description: GSATS and WRCOG will take reasonable steps to ensure that all persons, including those with a disability or those encountering a language barrier, have meaningful opportunities to participate in the transportation planning and programming process, and will strive to address environmental justice issues at all stages of the planning process. This includes implementing the following strategies to reduce participation barriers for under-served groups and engage them in the decision-making process:

- MPO and RPO will make efforts to identify representatives of minority, disability, low-income, and limited English proficiency groups to include in notifications.
- Key planning documents will be translated and public notices broadcasted for non-English speaking populations upon request.
- Whenever possible, meetings will be held at locations accessible to persons with disabilities, bus riders, and bicyclists and that are convenient to neighborhoods with a concentration of minority and low-income persons.
- Where meeting facilitators are used, GSATS and WRCOG will seek to use persons that represent the diversity of the community and/or have expertise in working with under-served groups.
- Translators/interpreters will be provided for meetings, if requested.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, long range plan updates, Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan review and updates, and other major RPO or MPO activities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

PUBLIC DOCUMENT REVIEW, COMMENT, AND APPROVAL POLICIES

GSATS/WRCOG

| Program Adoption | Public Meetings | Comment Period | Accessibility |
|--|--|----------------|--|
| Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan | 1 Meeting for each county at various locations and times | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Public Participation Plan | As requested | 45 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Other DOT Required Plans, Programs, or Processes where Policy Committee Approval is Needed | As requested | 45 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |

GSATS

| Program Adoption | Public Meetings | Comment Period | Accessibility |
|--|---|----------------|--|
| Long Range Transportation Plan (MTP) | 4 Meetings at various locations and times | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) | 4 Meetings at various locations and times | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Congestion Management Process (CMP) | 4 Meetings at various locations and times | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) | As requested | 30 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |

WRCOG

| Program Adoption | Public Meetings | Comment Period | Accessibility |
|--|---|----------------|--|
| Rural Long Range Transportation Plan | 3 Meetings at various locations and times | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Rural Transportation Improvement Program | 3 Meetings at various locations and times | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Rural Planning Work Program | As requested | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office |

PUBLIC DOCUMENT AMENDMENT REVIEW, COMMENT, AND APPROVAL POLICIES

GSATS/WRCOG

| Program Amendment Adoption | Public Meetings | Comment Period | Accessibility |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Title VI/Environmental Justice Plan | As requested | 30 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |
| Public Participation Plan | As requested | 45 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |
| Other DOT Required Plans, Programs, or Processes where Policy Committee Approval is Needed | As requested | 30 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |

GSATS

| Program Amendment Adoption | Public Meetings | Comment Period | Accessibility |
|--|-----------------|----------------|--|
| Long Range Transportation Plan (MTP) | As requested | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) | As requested | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Congestion Management Process (CMP) | As requested | 30 Days | Internet, WRCOG Office, Public Libraries |
| Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) | As requested | 15 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |

WRCOG

| Program Amendment Adoption | Public Meetings | Comment Period | Accessibility |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Rural Long Range Transportation Plan | As requested | 30 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |
| Rural Transportation Improvement Program | As requested | 30 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |
| Rural Planning Work Program | As requested | 30 Days | Internet & WRCOG Office |

PUBLIC MEETING GUIDELINES

| Open Meetings | Location | Time | Accessibility |
|---|--|---|--|
| Policy Committee | Surfside Beach Town Hall -or- Other Regional Facility | 10:00 AM Monday or Friday | ADA accessible building; Translation; and other special needs upon request |
| Transportation Advisory Committee (NC) | Carolina Shores Town Hall -or- Other Regional Facility (NC) | 10:00 AM Various days Monday to Friday | ADA accessible building; Translation; and other special needs upon request |
| Study Team (SC) | Myrtle Beach City Hall -or- Other Regional Facility (SC) -or- Via Conference Call | 10:00 AM Various days Monday to Friday | ADA accessible building; Translation; and other special needs upon request |
| Technical Coordinating Committee (NC) | Carolina Shores Town Hall -or- Other Regional Facility (NC) -or- Via Conference Call | 10:00 AM Various days Monday to Friday | ADA accessible building; Translation; and other special needs upon request |
| WRCOG Board of Directors | WRCOG Office -or- Other Regional Facility | 7:00 PM Monday | ADA accessible building; Translation; and other special needs upon request |
| Rural Technical Committee | WRCOG Office -or- Other Regional Facility -or- Via Conference Call | 10:00 AM Wednesday | ADA accessible building; other special needs upon request |
| Ad Hoc Working Group | Various Regional Facility as decided by the Group | Various times and days | ADA accessible building; Translation; and other special needs upon request |

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Techniques for future consideration include:

Fact Sheets

Description: Fact Sheets can be used to provide summary information regarding policy, programs, and projects. Fact sheets could be distributed at public meetings, on the GSATS or WRCOG websites, public places such as libraries and community centers, and can be requested from the staff office.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, project priorities process, updates to long range plans, and TIPs, and other RPO or MPO activities.

Logo

Description: A logo representing the RPO or MPO is used to identify products and publications of the RPO or MPO. A logo helps the public become familiar with the different activities of the RPO or MPO by providing a means of recognizing RPO or MPO products.

Activities: A logo should be used on all MPO and RPO publications including those developed by consultants working on RPO or MPO sponsored projects.

Newsletter

Description: Staff could produce a periodic newsletter that is distributed to citizens, local governments, media, and other agencies. Citizens would be added to the distribution list by their own request. Opportunities to request being added to the list could occur during public meetings hosted by GSATS or WRCOG on the GSATS or WRCOG websites, and when citizens contact staff.

Each issue of the newsletter would include staff contact information, upcoming meeting schedules, the GSATS or WRCOG website address, project highlights, current planning project status reports, and/or other one-time activities are also included. Citizens will be able to sign up for the newsletter, as well as other RPO or MPO information, via the website.

Activities: The newsletter is used to report planning studies, publications, and work products from the past year.

Project-specific Newsletters

Description: For individual projects, such as corridor studies, that are typically performed using consulting services, newsletters are often used to address specific project issues. These newsletters can be posted on the GSATS or WRCOG websites. Email notifications would be sent to the distribution list from the master database. Newsletters could also be mailed to targeted residents, elected officials representing that area, businesses, and property owners in the area that are expected to be impacted by a particular study. Information regarding upcoming project meetings, alternatives being proposed in the area, and other project news is reported in these newsletters.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, or major RPO or MPO activities.

Project-specific Websites

Description: For individual projects, such as corridor studies, that are typically performed using consulting services, project-specific websites are often used. These sites are used when project information is too extensive to be included on the GSATS or WRCOG websites. Project websites can contain study area maps, meeting announcements, descriptions of potential alternatives, comment forms, user surveys, and project team contact information.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, and major RPO or MPO projects.

Comment Forms

Description: Comment forms can be used to solicit public comment on both specific issues being presented at a workshop or other public meeting or general in nature. For example, a comment form may ask for comments on specific alignment alternatives being considered during a corridor study, or may ask for a person's general feelings about any aspect of transportation. Comment forms could be included in publications and on websites to solicit input regarding the available information or format of the publication or website.

Activities: Public workshops, open houses, hearings, and other meetings, and general RPO or MPO activities.

Surveys

Description: Surveys can be used for gathering specific input from the public such as whether a person supports a specific alignment in a corridor study. Surveys can also be used to gather technical data during corridor and planning studies such as daily travel patterns.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, and other planning studies.

Formal Public Hearings

Description: Formal public hearings are meetings used to solicit public comment on a project or issue being considered for adoption by the RPO or MPO. Hearings provide a formal setting for citizens to provide comments to the RPO, MPO, or another decision-making body.

Activities: Long range plans, TIPs updates, corridor studies, project development, environmental studies, and other planning studies as needed for other RPO or MPO activities.

Posters and Fliers

Description: Posters and fliers can be used to announce meetings and events and are distributed to public places such as city halls, libraries, and community centers for display. The announcement may contain a brief description of the purpose of a meeting, the time(s) and location(s), and contact information. Posters and fliers may be used to reach a large audience that cannot be reached using direct mailings and/or newsletters.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, and RPO activities.

News and Media

Description: Formal press releases could be sent to local media (newspaper, TV, and radio) to announce upcoming special meetings and activities and to provide information on specific issues being considered by the RPO, MPO, or their committees.

News articles may be prepared for publication in other newsletters produced by local governments, homeowners' associations, church groups, civic groups, or others that may have an interest in the project. These articles are subject to the publication dates and space restrictions of the individual publishers.

Activities: Specific corridor or other planning studies, sub area studies, workshops, open houses, public hearings, and other major or special RPO or MPO activities.

Government Access Television

Description: The local cable network provider as part of basic cable service maintains local channels of government and business advertisements. Government Access Television can broadcast rolling message scripts and regular and special meetings, both live and pre-recorded, as well as short informative programs about departmental activities or projects of interest to the entire population.

Activities: Corridor studies, sub-area studies, other planning studies, and RPO or MPO activities.

EVALUATION METHODS, PERFORMANCE GOALS, AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

GSATS (MPO) and WRCOG (RPO) continually strive for improved public participation. Improvements should be made to increase public awareness and to improve the quantity and quality of information provided to the public. The decisions made by GSATS and WRCOG affect both residents and visitors. Therefore, seeking public input on those decisions is vital to the success of rural transportation planning. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation tools, both a quantitative assessment of the number of participants, as well as a qualitative assessment of the level of interaction and information exchanged are necessary.

- WRCOG will monitor public participation through various means, including:
- Taking attendance at public outreach meetings using a sign-in sheet;
- Keeping a log of contacts with the public, via phone, mail, email, in-person meetings, or other means, which resulted from a public outreach activity;
- Keeping a record of attendance and involvement at RPO events;
- Tracking the number of completed surveys or comment cards received from a public outreach event;
- Monitoring traffic to the WRCOG website and number of RPO page views;
- Tracking distribution of public information materials, including newsletters, and other publications;
- Tracking number of addresses on mailing lists; and
- Other means appropriate for the type of public outreach used.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- Statistics can be used to determine the outcomes of public participation tools. This evaluation can be an indicator of whether or not the tools used for public participation are actually reaching the intended audience or which tools had greater response rates. Statistical analysis will include identifying:
- Special circumstances which may have contributed to an unusually high or low attendance.
- The nature of the notification process for the public outreach activity, including press releases, paid advertising, mailed notices, emails, phone calls, and other means.
- The analysis results will be evaluated annually to assess if the public involvement techniques are effective. The evaluation will note the public involvement techniques used,

the public's response, and the public involvement objectives that were met by the meeting. The result of each evaluation will be used to create a list of improvement strategies and an implementation plan. Records of the monitoring and evaluation process will be kept on file at the WRCOG office.

APPENDIX V

DEPICTING OF MINORITY REPRESENTATION ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

WRCOG

To facilitate and encourage maximum interaction among local, state and federal governments or agencies and the local community, WRCOG has adopted a committee structure. The Policy Committee (Board of Directors), as the official decision making body, establishes the policies for the overall conduct of WRCOG, is responsible for the adoption of plans and programs and approves study recommendations.

The Rural Technical Committee (RTC), which is established by the Board of Directors, is composed of the professional/technical representatives of the member governments and public agencies having direct or indirect responsibility for transportation planning and/or implementation.

Membership of Committees, Broken Down by Race

| Body | Caucasian | African American | Latino | Asian American | Other Races |
|--------|-----------|------------------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| RTC | 57% | 43% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| POLICY | 60% | 40% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

GSATS

To facilitate and encourage maximum interaction among local, state, and federal governments or agencies and the local community, GSATS has an adopted a committee structure. The Policy Committee, as the official decision making body, establishes the policies for the overall conduct of GSATS, is responsible for the adoption of plans and programs and approves study recommendations.

The Technical Committee (or Study Team), which is established by the Policy Committee, is composed of the professional/technical representatives of the member governments and public agencies having direct or indirect responsibility for transportation planning and/or implementation.

Membership of Committees, Broken Down by Race

| Body | Caucasian | African American | Latino | Asian American | Other Races |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| TCC (NC) | 90% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 5% |
| STUDY TEAM (SC) | 79% | 16% | 5% | 0% | 0% |
| TAC (NC) | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| POLICY | 80% | 20% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

APPENDIX VI

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA AND MAPS

WRCOG

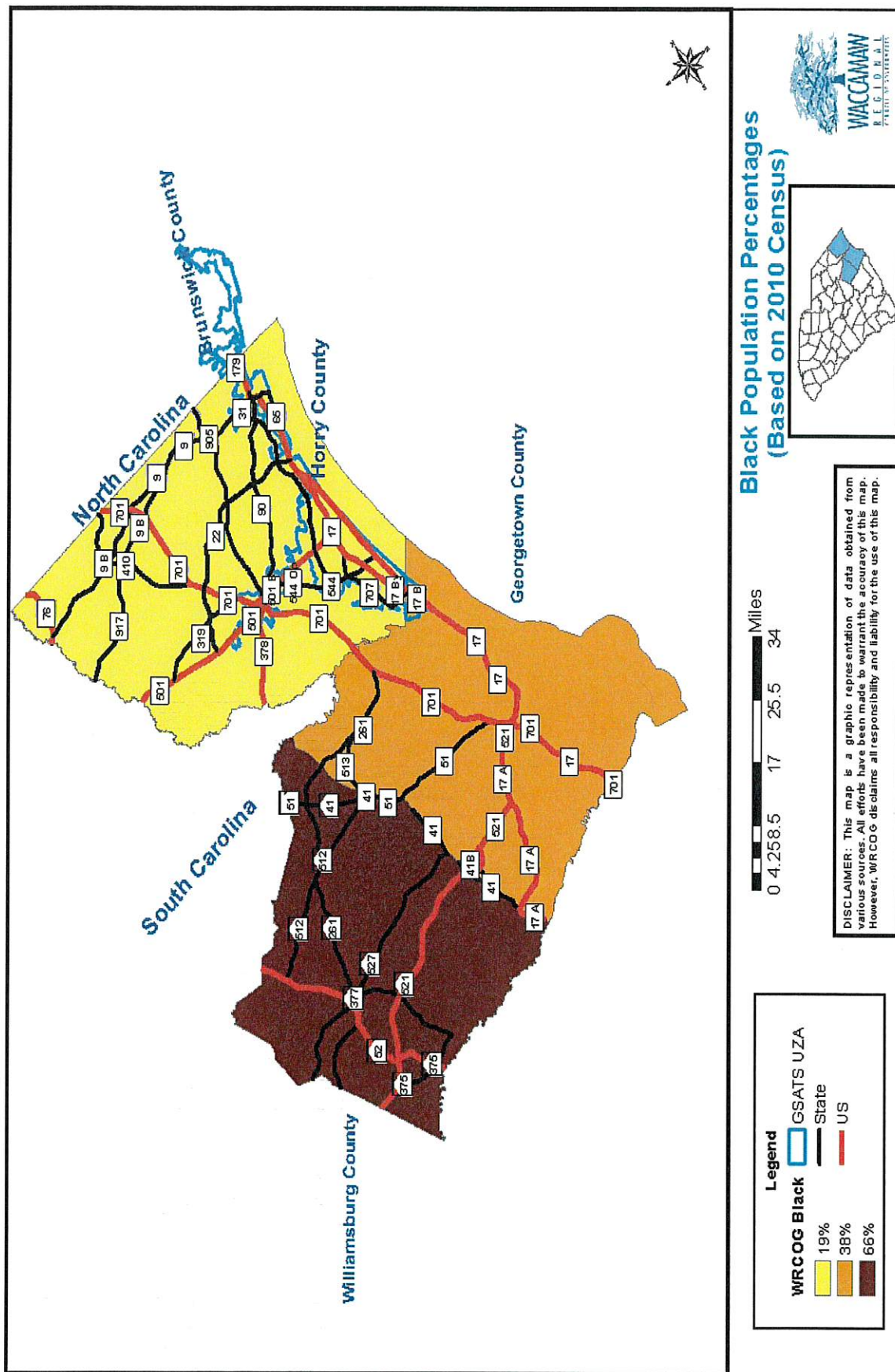
A review of the 2010 Census for the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments was conducted to evaluate representation of minority populations and low-income households. (See Table Below)

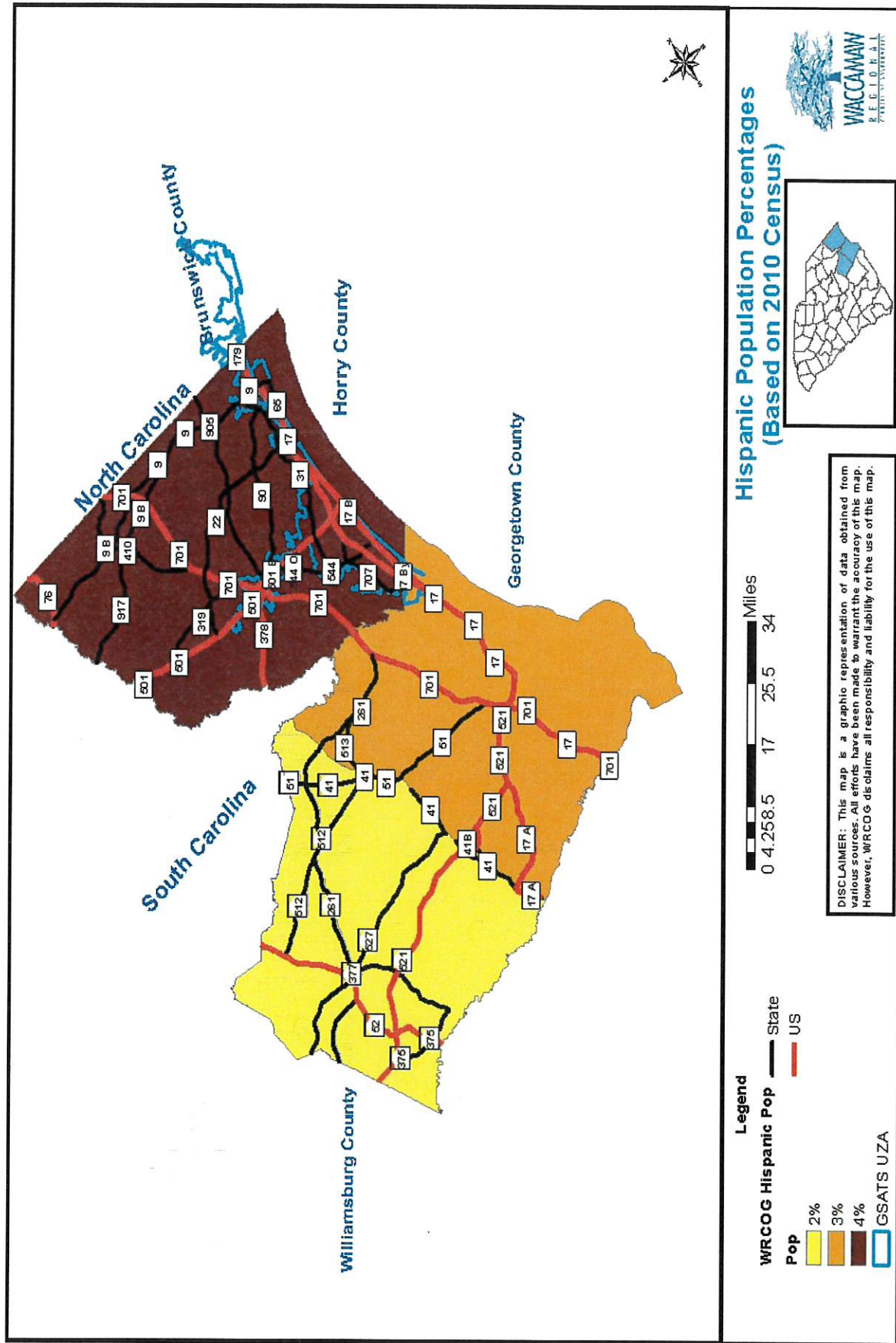
| WRCOG Population Percentages | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | WRCOG Region | Georgetown Co. | Horry Co. | Williamsburg Co. |
| Population | 168,847 | 52,619 | 81,805 | 34,423 |
| Black or African American Population | 58,277 | 19,737 | 15,903 | 22,637 |
| % Regional Black Population | 35% | 38% | 19% | 66% |
| Hispanic Population | 5,758 | 1,698 | 3,371 | 689 |
| % Regional Hispanic Population | 3% | 3% | 4% | 2% |
| Other Race Population | 4,305 | 1,181 | 2,539 | 585 |
| %Regional Other Race Population | 3% | 2% | 3% | 2% |
| 65 and Older Population | 28,801 | 8,393 | 15,369 | 5,039 |
| % Regional 65 and Older Population | 17% | 16% | 19% | 15% |
| Poverty Population* | 38,977 | 11,989 | 17,135 | 9,853 |
| %Regional Poverty Population* | 23% | 23% | 21% | 29% |

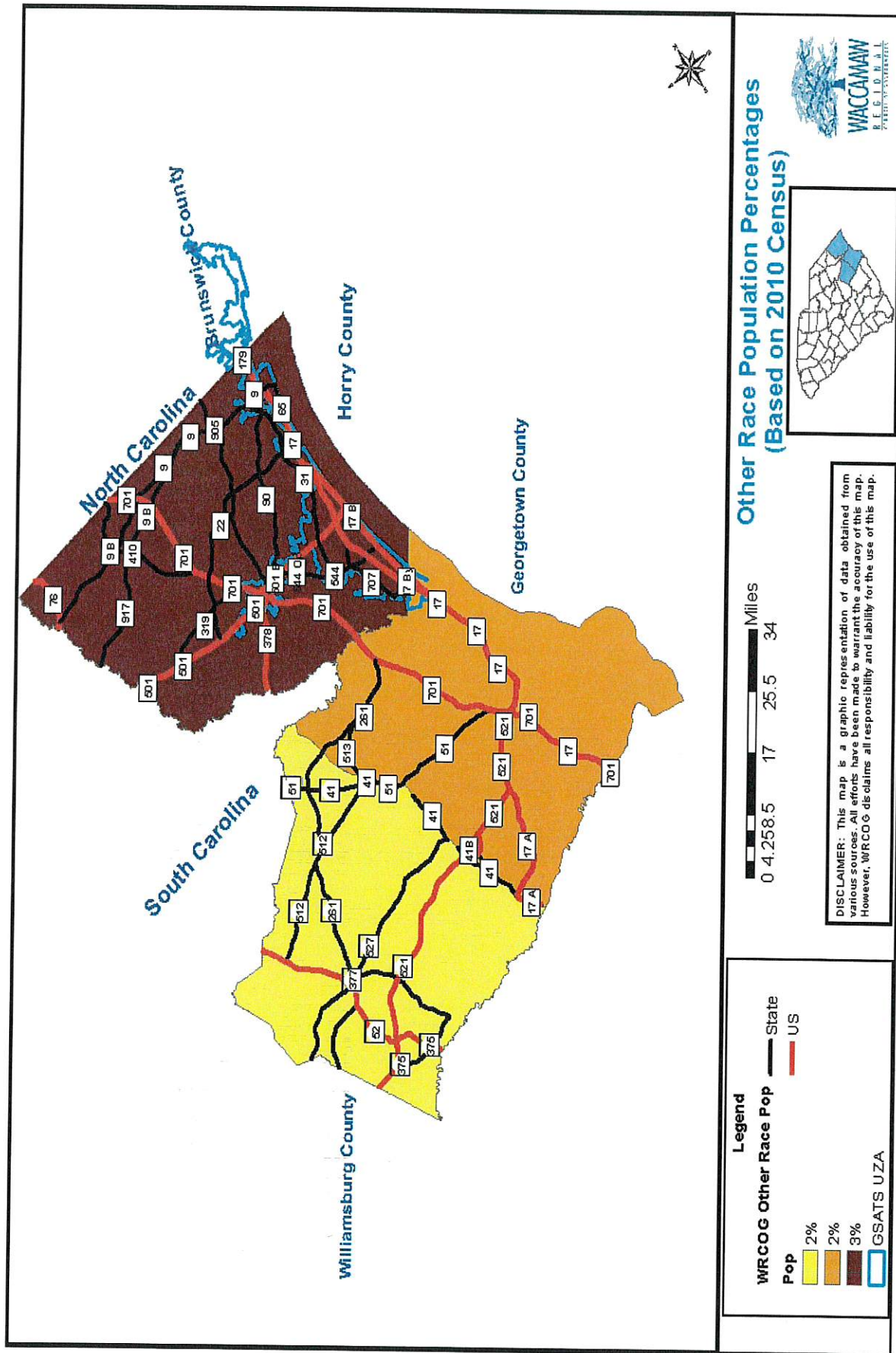
2010 Census Data *2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Estimates

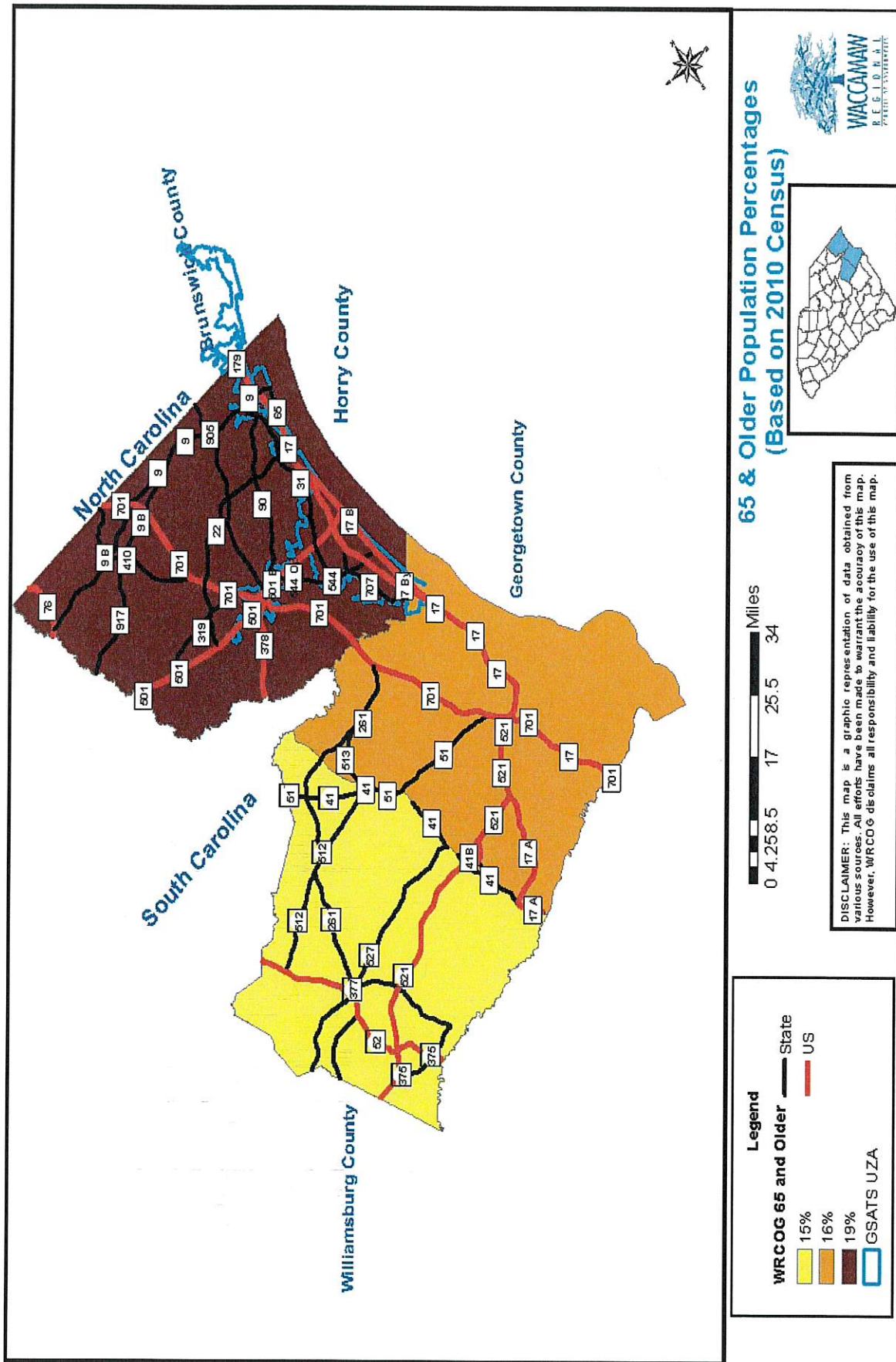
According to the regional totals, minority populations make up approximately 35% of the WRCOG region with the largest share residing in Horry County. In addition, the 65 and older population is about 17% percent of the region and the largest share resides in Horry County as well. The regional poverty population is estimated to be 38,977 which is 23% of the WRCOG region. The majority of the poverty populations reside in Horry County.

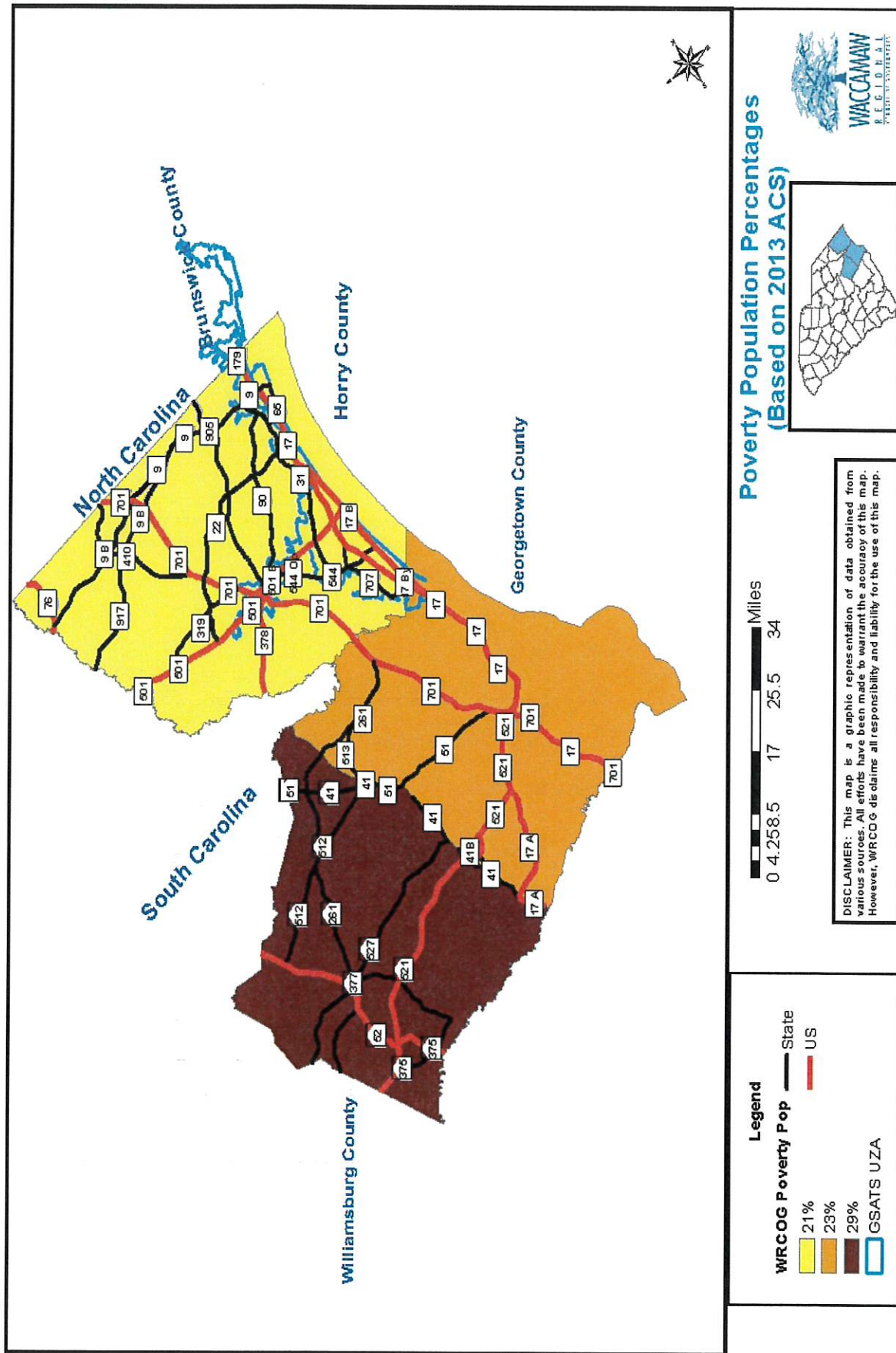
The following maps illustrate the areas of the region where the percentages of minority, Hispanic, and 65 and older populations exceed the regional percentages thresholds. The study area's population that is below the poverty line is also illustrated.











GSATS

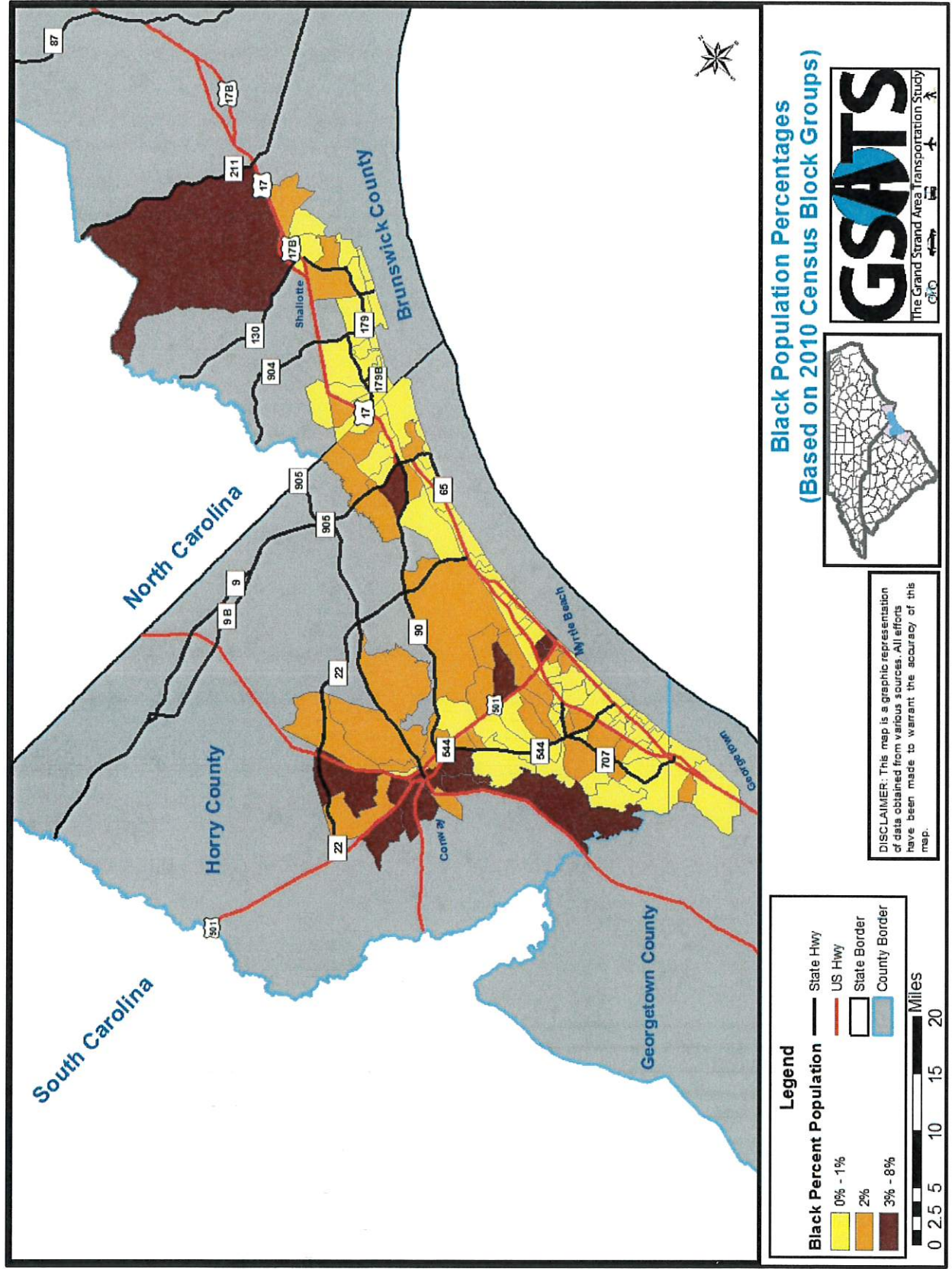
A review of the 2010 Census for the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study was conducted to evaluate representation of minority populations and low-income households. (See Table Below)

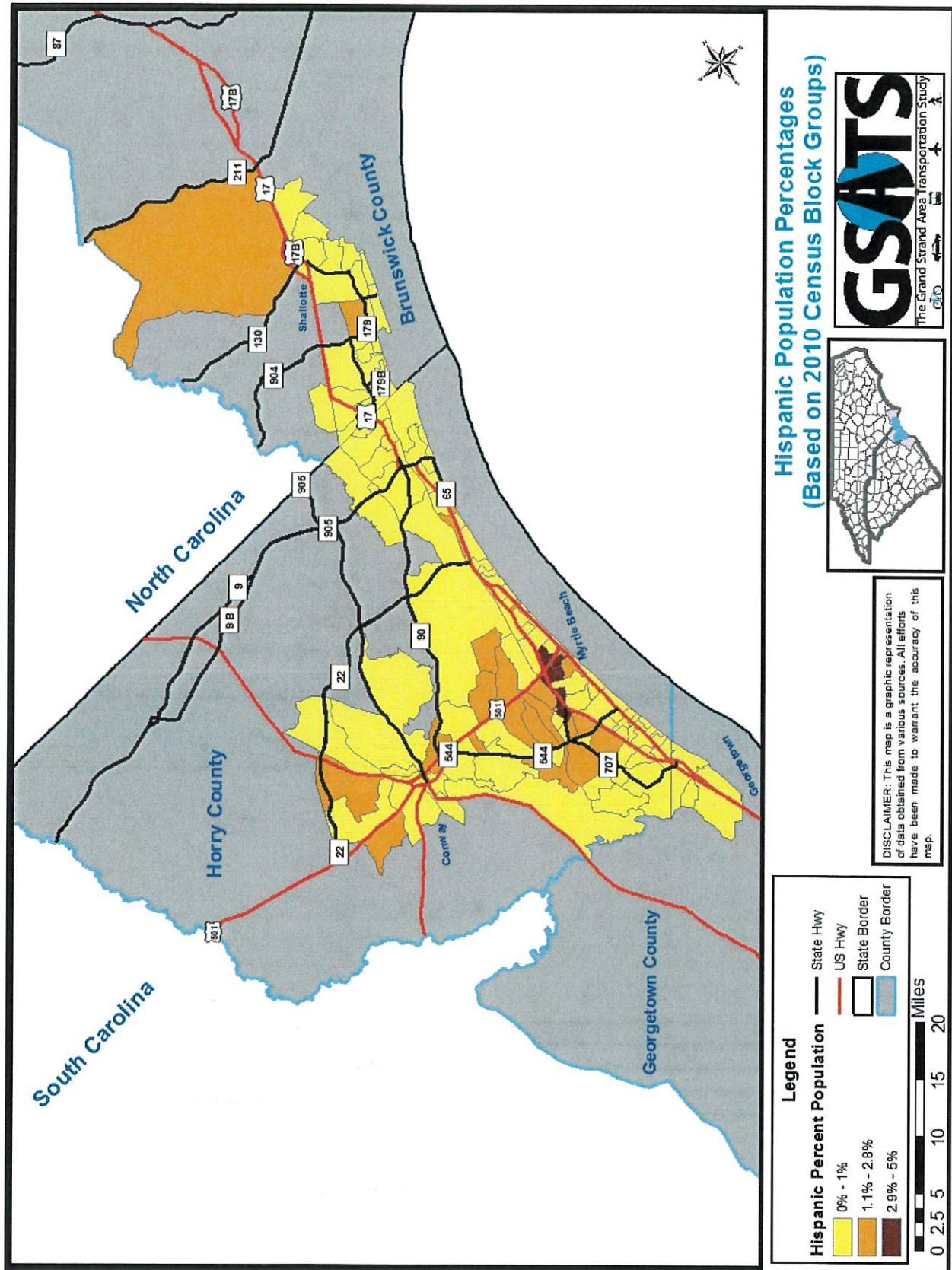
| | GSATS Population Percentages | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| | GSATS Region | Georgetown GSATS | Horry GSATS | Brunswick (NC) GSATS |
| Population | 215,304 | 7,539 | 187,486 | 20,279 |
| Black or African American Population | 21,402 | 477 | 20,299 | 626 |
| % Regional Black Population | 10% | 6% | 11% | 3% |
| Hispanic Population | 14,535 | 169 | 13,312 | 1,054 |
| % Regional Hispanic Population | 7% | 2% | 7% | 5% |
| Other Race Population | 11,348 | 209 | 10,227 | 912 |
| %Regional Other Race Population | 5% | 3% | 5% | 4% |
| 65 and Older Population | 37,863 | 3,527 | 24,701 | 9,635 |
| % Regional 65 and Older Population | 18% | 47% | 13% | 48% |
| Poverty Population* | 37,259 | 674 | 33,709 | 2,876 |
| %Regional Poverty Population* | 17% | 0.09% | 18% | 14% |

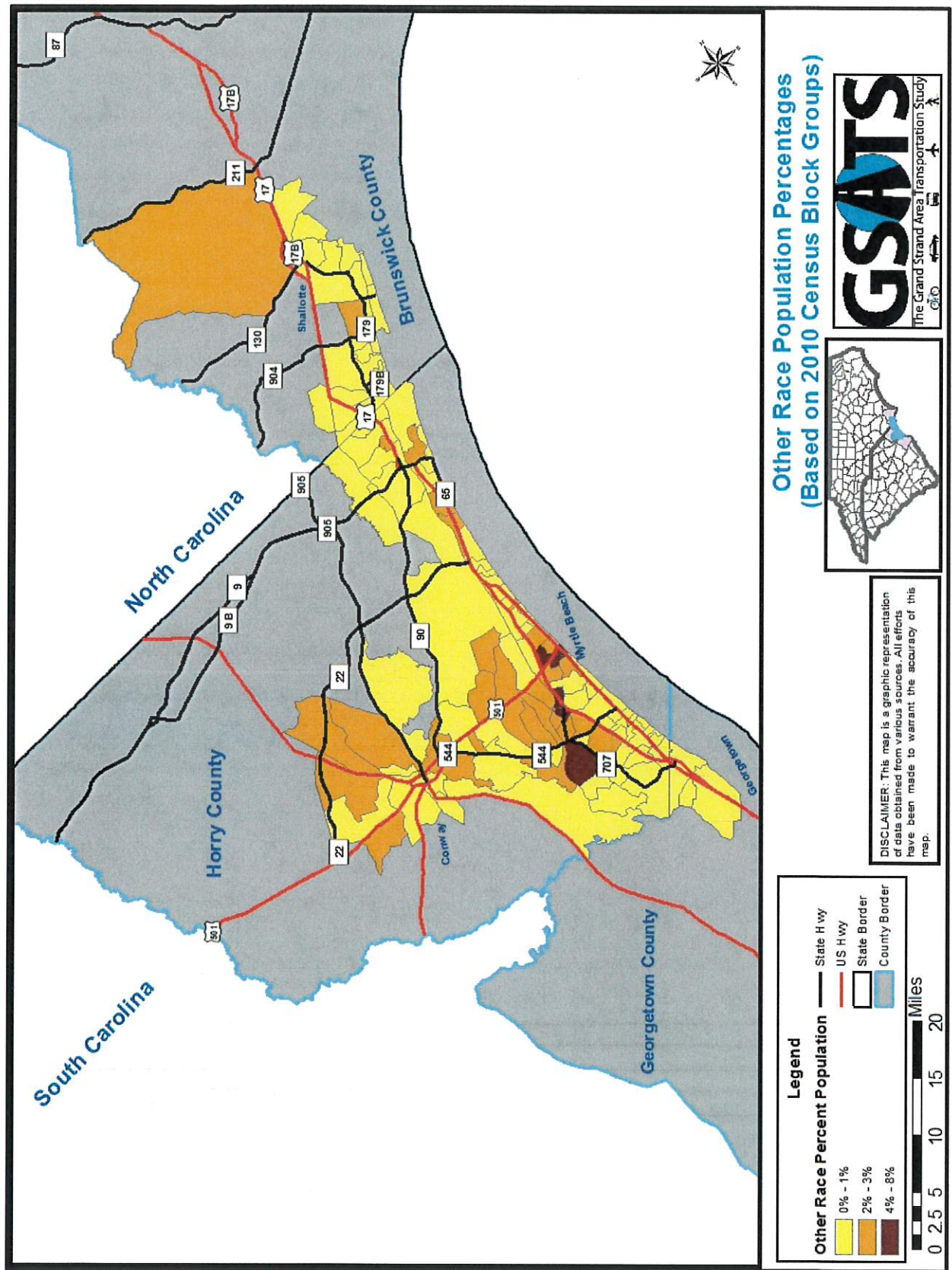
2010 Census Data *2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Estimates

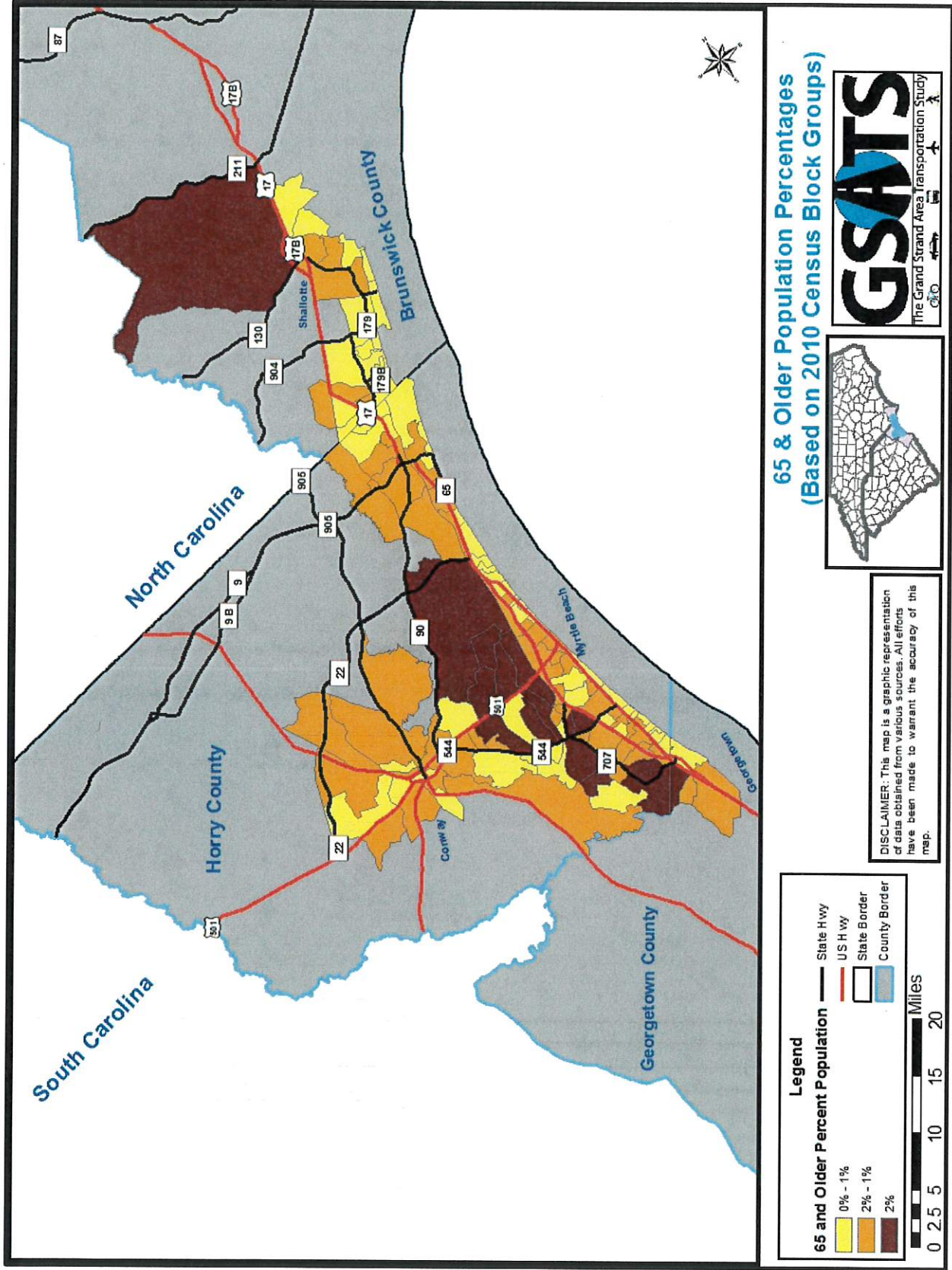
According to the regional totals, minority populations make up approximately 20% of the GSATS region with the largest share residing in Horry County. In addition, the 65 and older population is about 44% of the region and the largest share resides in Horry County as well. The regional poverty population is estimated to be 37,259, which is 17% of the GSATS region. The majority of the poverty populations reside in Horry County.

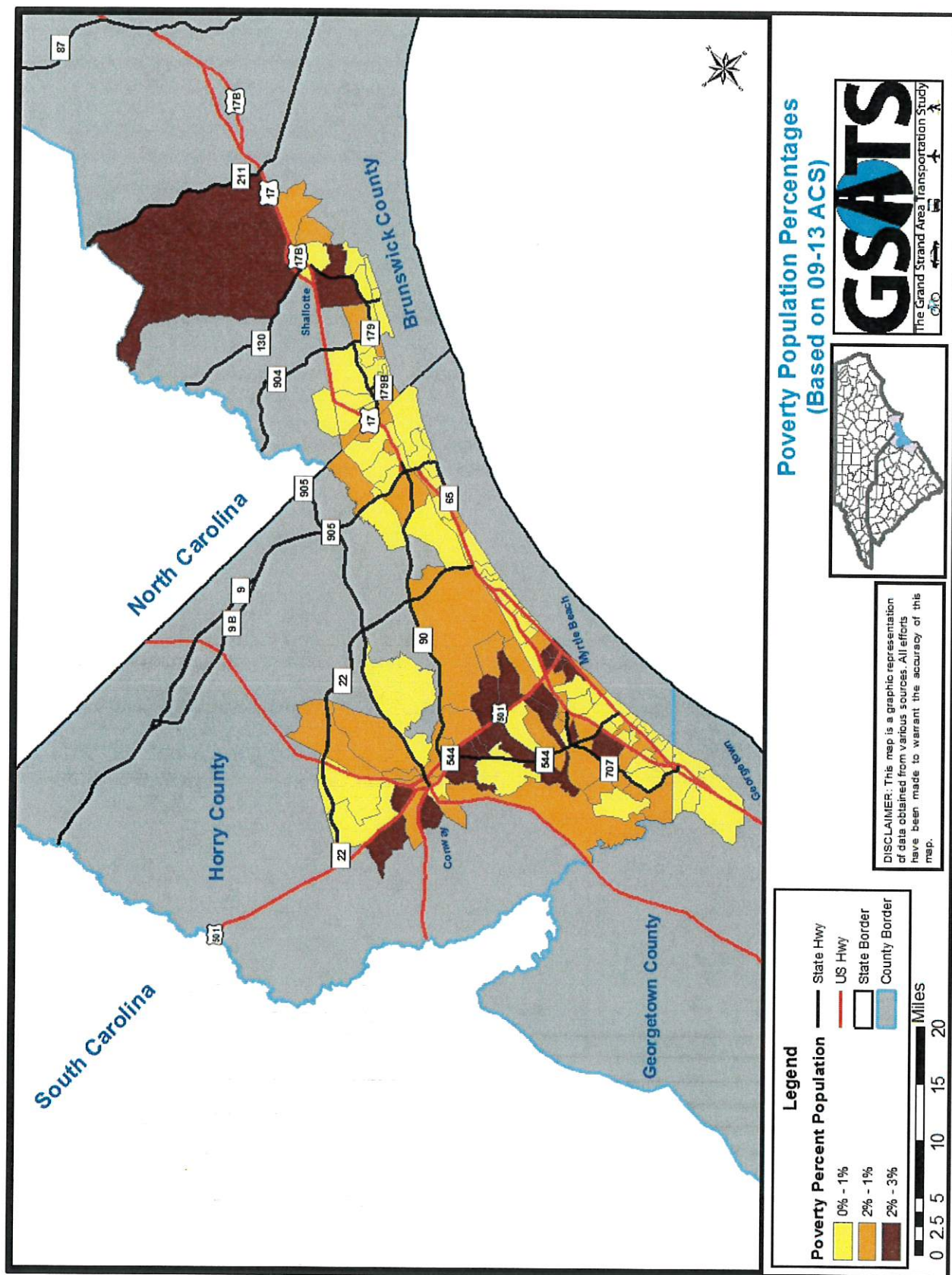
The following maps illustrate the areas of the region where the percentages of minority, Hispanic, and 65 and older populations exceed the regional percentages thresholds. The study area's population that is below the poverty line is also illustrated.











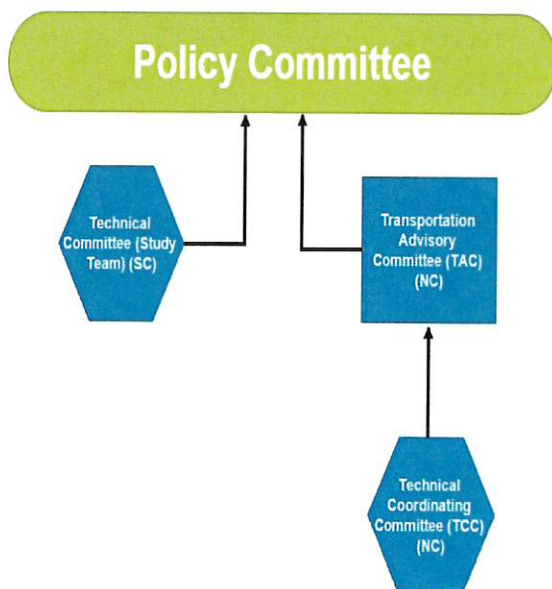
APPENDIX VII

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

WRCOG RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS



GSATS MPO PLANNING PROCESS



APPENDIX VIII

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

WRCOG/GSATS will comply with the following data collection and reporting requirements as outlined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA):

All applicants, recipients, and subrecipients are required to maintain and provide upon request the information outlined below. The information is required under DOJ regulation and must be submitted prior to the approval of any grant application. Recipients and subrecipients should provide updated information as conditions warrant. Updates must at a minimum be provided every three (3) years. Information previously submitted under the General Reporting Requirements may be referenced in subsequent submissions, as appropriate.

All applicants, recipients, and subrecipients shall maintain and submit the following general requirements:

- A list of any active lawsuits or complaints naming the applicant, which allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin with respect to service or other transit benefits. The list should include: the date the lawsuit or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation; and the status of the lawsuit or complaint, including whether the parties to the lawsuit have entered into a consent decree. For applicants of assistance under Section 6, 10, 16(b)(2), and 18, this information should be maintained and made available upon request. For all applicants for FHWA or FTA assistance, this information should be relevant to the organizational entity actually submitting the application, not necessarily the larger agency or department of which the entity is a part (e.g., not all information on all modes of transportation);
- A description of all pending applications for financial assistance, and all financial assistance currently provided by other Federal agencies. For applicants of assistance under Section 6, 10, 16(b)(2), and 18, this information should be maintained and made available upon request. For all applicants applying for federal assistance, this information should be relevant to the organizational entity actually submitting the application, not necessarily the larger agency or department of which the entity is a part;
- A summary of all civil rights compliance review activities conducted in the last three (3) years. The summary should include: the purpose or reason for the review; the name of the agency or organization that performed the review; a summary of the findings and recommendations of the review; and a report on the status and/or disposition of such findings and recommendations. For all applicants applying for federal assistance, this information should be relevant to the organizational entity actually submitting the application, not necessarily the larger agency or department of which the entity is a part; and

- A signed Civil Rights Assurance that all of the records and other information required under Title VI and related statutes have been or will be compiled, as appropriate, and maintained by the applicant, recipient, or subrecipient. In the case of state administered programs, this assurance should be provided by the primary and subrecipient (**Appendix I**).

For construction projects, a fixed-facility impact analysis to assess the effects on minority communities. If this information has been prepared as a result of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, the applicant, recipient, or subrecipient should reference the relevant information by document, page number(s), and date of submission to FHWA or FTA. The analysis should include the following information.

- A discussion of the potential impact on minority communities and minority-owned businesses during and after construction;
- A discussion of all potential negative environmental impact, such as noise, air, or water pollution;
- A detailed list of minority-owned businesses and households that will be affected by the construction project;
- A description of other significant changes or impacts on the minority community, such as increased traffic, reductions in the amount of available parking, etc.; and
- A description of the relocation program and/or other measures adopted by the applicant that will be used to mitigate any identified adverse social, economic, or environmental effect of the proposed construction project.

APPENDIX IX

LIST OF TITLE VI INVESTIGATIONS, COMPLAINTS, AND LAWSUITS

WRCOG, GSATS, all subrecipients, and contractors shall prepare and maintain a list of any of the following that allege discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin:

- Active investigation conducted by FTA or FHWA and other entities;
- Lawsuits; and
- Complaints naming the recipient.

This list shall include the date that the transit-related Title VI investigation, lawsuit, or complaint was filed; a summary of the allegation(s); the status of the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint; and actions taken by the recipient in response, or final findings related to the investigation, lawsuit, or complaint. This list shall include in the Title VI Program submitted every three (3) years.

There are no current or pending lawsuits, complaints, or investigations being held or filed currently as of February 20, 2019.

TITLE VI COMPLAINT LOG

[illegible]

TITLE VI COMPLAINT LOG

[illegible]

APPENDIX X

NON-APPLICABLE TITLE VI GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT

The Fixed Route Transit Provider Requirements in Chapter 4 of the Title VI Program Regulations are not applicable to Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) or the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS). Neither WRCOG nor GSATS operates a fixed route or an on demand transit system. GSATS is a Designated Recipient for the FTA Section 5310 funds and is a pass through to the subrecipients, over which we have oversight.

FACILITY SITE EQUITY ANALYSIS

The Facility Site Equity Analysis in Chapter 3: General Requirements and Guidelines is not applicable to Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) rural transportation program or the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study (GSATS). Neither WRCOG nor GSATS identifies sites or constructs facilities for the transportation program.

APPENDIX XI

TITLE VI DESIGNEE

TITLE VI DESIGNEE POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title VI Designee

The Title VI Designee is the Coordinator for the Title VI-Environmental Justice program for Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and Grand Strand Transportation Study (GSATS). The Designee will be the Planner associated with transportation/transit planning in the Planning Department

Responsibilities

The Coordinator is responsible for supervising staff activities pertaining to Title VI regulations and procedures set forth in federal guidance and in accordance with WRCOG/GSATS Title VI Plan. The Title VI Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Identify, investigate, and work to eliminate discrimination when found to exist;
- Process Title VI complaints received by WRCOG/GSATS, as described in Appendix II;
- Maintain a Title VI Complain Log;
- Meet with appropriate staff members to monitor and discuss progress, implementation, and compliance issues related to WRCOG/GSATS Title VI program;
- Periodically review the agency's Title VI program to assess if administrative procedures are effective, staffing is appropriate, and adequate resources are available to ensure compliance;
- Work with staff, consultants, and recipients to resolve any deficiency status and write a remedial action if necessary (as described in the consultant contracts section of this plan) if a federal funding recipient is found to not be in compliance with Title VI;
- Review important Title VI-related issues with the WRCOG Executive Director and the MPO Director;
- Review and revise (if necessary) the Title VI-Environmental Justice Document Triennially; and
- Assess communications and public involvement strategies to ensure adequate participation of impacted Title VI protected groups and address additional language needs.

Allocated Time

In order for the Title VI Coordinator to complete the assigned tasks associated with administering the Title VI program, ten (10) hours per month will be dedicated to the program coordination. Additional time will be approved to accommodate any meetings, public hearings, and any additional activities that are necessary to ensure the Title VI program is operating accordingly.

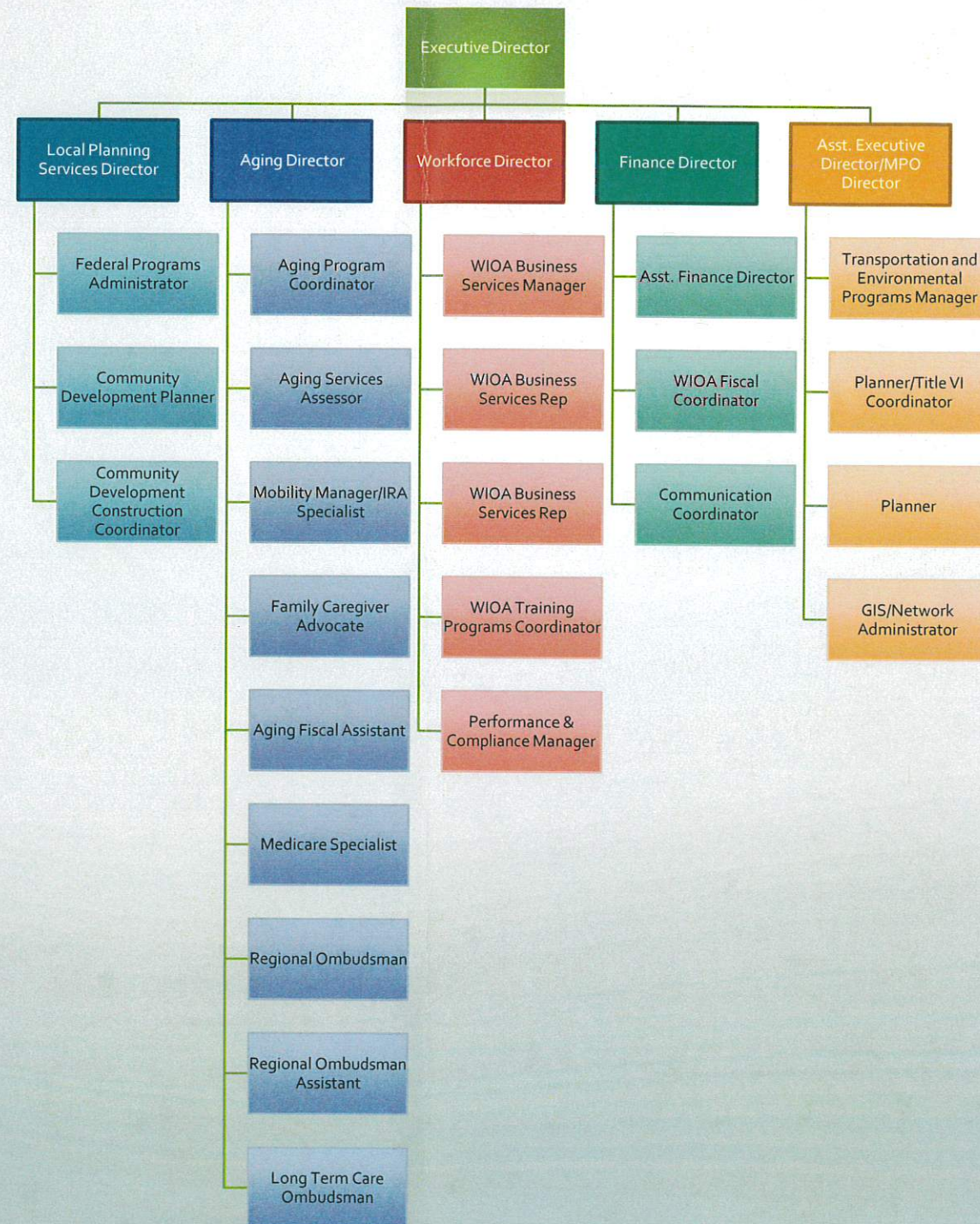


Sarah P. Smith, Executive Director

10/22/20

Date

WRCOG Organization Chart



APPENDIX XII

TITLE VI PLAN BOARD APPROVALS



RESOLUTION

of the

WACCAMAW REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION 2019-02

SUMMARY:

This Resolution approves the WRCOG/GSATS Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan, 2019. Upon approval, this document will be sent to the Federal Transit Administration Region IV, Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Department of Transportation, and South Carolina Department of Transportation in accordance with Civil Rights requirements for a grantee.

PREAMBLE:

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors for Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments is the Transportation Planning Organization for the rural areas for Georgetown and Horry counties and all of Williamsburg County;

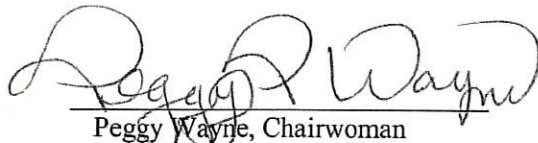
WHEREAS, FTA Circular 4702.1B requires that each designated recipient develop a Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan to ensure that all recipients receiving financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration not be discriminated against, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of federal financial assistance, on grounds of race, color, or nation origin for federal financial assistance;

WHEREAS, the *WRCOG-GSATS' Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan* was developed in 2016; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and beneficial to update the Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan to incorporate current data that reflects the Myrtle Beach-Socastee SC/NC Urbanized Area and to ensure compliance with the latest transportation legislation (FAST Act) and FTA Circular 4702.1B guidance;

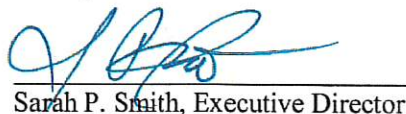
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments Board of Directors, that it adopts the 2019 Title VI -Environmental Justice Plan and endorses its policies and procedures.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED BY THE WACCAMAW REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JUNE 10, 2019.


Peggy Wayne, Chairwoman

6-10-19
Date

Attested By:


Sarah P. Smith, Executive Director

6-10-19
Date

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments (WRCOG) and Grand Stand Area Transportation Study (GSATS) will consider the update of the Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan. The plan is required by federal law to ensure low income and the minority populations are considered and included in the transportation process.

The draft Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan is available at Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments' office (1230 Highmarket St Georgetown, SC 29440), and on the WRCOG website at www.wrcog.org and the GSATS website at www.gsats.org.

All written comments received before May 29, 2019 will be considered. Please send comments to:

**Title VI-Environmental Justice Coordinator
c/o Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
1230 Highmarket Street
Georgetown, SC 29440-3227**

Or by e-mail to: etucker.wrcog.org

“Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Title VI Coordinator, Elizabeth Tucker (843-436-6136 or etucker@wrcog.org) at least 7 working days before the meeting date.”

**Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments
Board of Directors Meeting
June 10, 2019**

Members Present

Rep. Carl Anderson
Mayor Brendon Barber
Mayor Barbara Blain-Bellamy, Secretary
Mayor Bob Childs
Cam Crawford
Rep. Heather Crawford
Jean Dozier
Mayor Charlie Fulton
Mayor Frank McClary
Yancey McGill, Vice Chairman
Rev. Leslie McIver
Andy McKnight
Jerry Oakley
Paul Prince
Harry Huggins
Paul McCracken, Treasurer
Randal Wallace
Peggy Wayne, Chairwoman
Hon. Alma White

Members Absent

Rep. Russell Fry (excused)
John Rhodes (excused)
Ronnie Sabb (excused)
Johnny Morant (excused)
Jean Timbes (excused)
Mayor Darren Tisdale (excused)

Staff Present

Sarah Smith, Executive Director
Daniel Newquist
Ayla Hemeon
Mark Hoeweler
Tomas Langley

Guests Present

Danisha McClary
Chris Sokoloski
Everette Carolina
Dana Strock

* * * * *

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments' Board of Directors was held Monday, June 10, 2019 at 7:00 PM at the WRCOG's office. Chairwoman Peggy Wayne called the meeting to order and invited Rev. Leslie McIver to provide the invocation. A quorum was present. **Chairwoman Wayne asked for a motion to approve the May 2019 minutes. Rep. Carl Anderson moved to approve the minutes, Mayor Fulton seconded. Mayor McClary noted a misspelling of his name. The motion to approve the May minutes with corrections passed unanimously.**

Finance Report

Chairwoman Wayne introduced Ms. Kelly Stuckey to present the finance report. Ms. Stuckey noted that the Finance Report was prepared by the Finance Director, Mr. Arnold Johnson, who was not in attendance at tonight's meeting. To date, the WRCOG is on track with the budget. Ms. Stuckey did point out that throughout the past fiscal year, several employees took extended

sick leave for various reasons. Ms. Stuckey also reviewed the pass through funds that get allocated towards external projects and programs.

Rep. Carl Anderson asked about the status of the WIP Summer Youth Work Program. Ms. Smith replied that when WIOA took effect in 2015, the summer work program ended. Under the new Act, the WIOA department can serve youth who are out of school and typically do not have a GED. The WRCOG Business Services staff can assist in school youth with resume development, job search process, and career counseling.

Mayor McClary inquired as to why several budget items still had nearly 100% of the funds available. Ms. Stuckey cited the Maintenance and Repair Expense line item as one that is in place on an as needed basis. Typically the repair and general maintenance of the office building is covered within the lease with Georgetown County. Ms. Smith noted that for some of the WIP programs, particularly the apprenticeship program, it is within the guidelines to have the funds carry forward to the next fiscal year. Ms. Smith confirmed that no funds will be lost if not spent before the end of the fiscal year. Mr. McGill applauded the staff for their efforts in prepping the financial report each month.

FY2020 Annual Budget

Ms. Stuckey continued with an overview of the proposed FY 2020 budget. This budget was reviewed by the Audit and Finance Committee at their 6:30pm meeting with a positive recommendation. There were a few notable changes from the prior year. The total budget decrease from the previous fiscal year is \$760,935. The most significant change is the removal of the budgeted salary for the 11 employees within the WIOA Department, who will now be employed by a Subcontractor. Mr. McGill asked what counties these employees worked in. Ms. Stuckey verified the affected staff worked at all three SC Works Center locations. As Ms. Stuckey mentioned in the financial report, since Sick Leave was utilized by staff more than in previous years, the # of days budgeted per year increased from 6 to 10. Employees accrue one sick leave day per one month of work experience at WRCOG. The final change of note is that the HOME Program will be closing out by the end of the fiscal year, hence \$200,000 less is budgeted for the next program year.

Chairwoman Wayne asked for a motion to approve the FY 2020 Annual Budget. Ms. Alma White made a motion to approve the budget as presented and recommended by the Finance Committee. Mayor Barber seconded. The budget was approved unanimously.

Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP)

Chairwoman Wayne invited Mr. Hoeweler to brief the Board on the Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP). Mr. Hoeweler explained that the RPWP is submitted to SCDOT and approved every two years. The purpose of the document is to outline staff planning activities and develop a budget of those activities over the next two years. There are five main categories of activities that must be addressed in the document: Administration; Land Use; Special Area Projects/Studies; Plan Development; and Program Development, and Maintenance.

Mr. McGill asked if the funding can be used for programming. Mr. Hoeweler clarified that the funds are specifically designated for planning activities, per guidance from the Federal Highway Administration. The annual budget includes \$85,000 from SCDOT with the addition of a 20% local match. The FY2020-21 RPWP was presented to the Rural Technical Committee and received a positive recommendation for approval.

Chairwoman Wayne asked for a motion to approve the 2020-21 RPWP. Mayor Barber made a motion to approve the 2020-21 RPWP as presented. Mayor Fulton seconded, and the motion to approve the RPWP passed unanimously.

WRCOG/GSATS Title VI- Environmental Justice Plan 2019

Mr. Hoeweler continued with an overview of the Title VI- Environmental Justice Plan. It is required to be updated once every three years. There were not too many significant changes since it was previously adopted in 2016. It was reviewed to ensure full compliance with the FAST Act, the current federal transportation bill. Most of the changes to the document were updates to the region's population and demographic data as well as an update of the demographic composition of each committee and board that is involved with GSATS or the WRCOG Rural Transportation Planning Program.

Mayor Blain-Bellamy pointed out that there were typographical errors. She also expressed concern as to whether all classes protected under Title VI were clearly covered in the document. She wanted to know how individuals who have been discriminated against based on English proficiency or age as examples are protected. Mr. Hoeweler indicated that those should be boilerplate template language based on the applicable federal laws.

Ms. Smith mentioned that the document has been reviewed by SCDOT for compliance and has been recommended for approval by both the GSATS Policy Committee and the Rural Technical Committee. Ms. Smith explained that Title VI covers specific protected classes and that there are other regulations that the COG certifies that it will also follow that cover other additional protected classes. Ms. Smith also confirmed that there are other plans and procedures of the COG that address other protected classes such as the Public Participation Plan, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise policy, and the Limited English Proficiency plan. The staff would be glad to distribute a list of all those required documents to the Board.

Rep. Crawford made a motion to defer the approval of the Title VI Plan until the next meeting to address the needed corrections and concerns from Board members. Mayor McClary seconded. Mr. Hoeweler indicated a deadline for submittal was quickly approaching and that several funding sources, particularly from the Federal Transit Administration cannot be authorized without an adopted Title VI Plan.

Mayor Barber stated that in his review of the Title VI policy statement as well as other portions of the plan that it appeared that all of the protected classes were included in the document but did agree that some sections could be more concise. Mr. Wallace suggested the inclusion of a chart to indicate which classes are protected within each federal program. Mr. Hoeweler confirmed that would be feasible.

Rep Crawford withdrew her motion. Mr. McCracken made a motion to approve the Resolution adopting the Title VI Plan, noting that typographical errors would be corrected by staff. Mayor Childs seconded. The motion to approve the Title VI Plan passed unanimously.

Finally, Mr. Hoeweler shared an update from SCDOT on the cost increases from the Rural TIP. He mentioned that four projects have been shifted to the SCDOT Safety program and the Horry County RIDE III program to offset the overall increases to the TIP budget.

Executive Director's Report

Chairwoman Wayne invited Ms. Smith to present the Executive Director's Report. Ms. Smith once again acknowledged the service of the 11 employees from the WIOA Department who will now be working under a contract with Ross. All employees are assured of at least six months of employment under the new contract and one employee has already received a promotion offer. The office will be providing a recognition lunch for them on June 20th. Ms. Smith also noted the absence of staff member Darryl Elliott who is on leave. Shane Stuckey has prepared the Board's meal this evening.

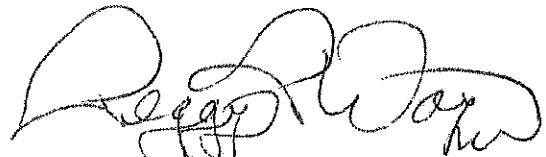
Mayor Fulton mentioned that on Thursday, June 13, the Town of Lane is holding an event to acknowledge the funding received from USDA to build a new Town Hall, upgrade the water and sewer system, and to purchase a new police vehicle.

Chairwoman Wayne asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. McCracken moved to adjourn, Mr. Prince seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00. The next Board of Directors' meeting will take place at WRCOG on August 12, 2019 at 7 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sarah Penick Smith
Executive Director



Peggy Wayne
Chairwoman of the Board

NOTE: An Agenda of this meeting was made available to persons, organizations, and local news media per their request. The agenda gives the date, time, and place of the meeting as well as the order of business. This disclosure is in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, §30-4-80(E).



The Grand Strand Area Transportation Study



MEETING NOTICE
Grand Strand Area Transportation Study
Policy Committee
Friday, May 31, 2019
10:30 A.M.

There will be a meeting of the GSATS Policy Committee in the Surfside Beach Town Hall, on the above date and time. Your packet contains an agenda, minutes of the February 15, 2019 meeting, a proposed Draft FY 20-21 UPWP, a memo with staff recommendations for projects for the Transit 5310 program, a memo outlining the update of the Title VI Plan, and a memo with an overview of the Transit Asset Management Plan. Project updates from SCDOT and NCDOT are also included in your packet. We will discuss the formation of a Safety Committee that will look at ways we can reduce the number of fatal and serious injury incidents. The FY20-21 UPWP, Title VI Plan, Transit Asset Management Plan, and the Transit 5310 funding requests are all presented in the agenda as action items for this meeting.

If you are unable to attend, please consider the option of a proxy. If you have any questions about how to tender your proxy, please call Mark Hoeweler at 436-6130. As always, your attendance and input is greatly appreciated.



POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Friday, May 31, 2019

10:30 AM

LOCATION: Surfside Beach Town Hall
115 US Hwy. 17 North, Surfside Beach

- | | | | |
|-------|--|---|--------------|
| I. | Adoption of the Agenda | Chairman Goldfinch | →Action Item |
| II. | Adoption of Minutes from February 15, 2019 | Chairman Goldfinch | →Action Item |
| III. | Public Comment | Chairman Goldfinch | |
| IV. | Projects Update | Stacey Johnson, SCDOT Caitlin Marks, NCDOT | |
| V. | FY 2020-21 UPWP Review | Mark Hoeweler | →Action Item |
| VI. | Transit 5310 Funding Application Review | Elizabeth Tucker | →Action Item |
| VII. | Title VI Plan Update | Elizabeth Tucker | →Action Item |
| VIII. | Transit Asset Management Plan Overview | Elizabeth Tucker | |
| IX. | Adjourn | New Chairman | →Action Item |



RESOLUTION

of the

GRAND STRAND AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE

Resolution No. 01.19

SUMMARY:

This Resolution approves the GSATS Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan, 2019. Upon approval, this document will be sent to the Federal Transit Administration Region IV, Federal Highway Administration, North Carolina Department of Transportation, and South Carolina Department of Transportation in accordance with Civil Rights requirements for a grantee.

PREAMBLE:

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee of the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Myrtle Beach-Socastee SC/NC Urbanized Area;

WHEREAS, FTA Circular 4702.1B requires that each designated recipient develop a Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan to ensure that all recipients receiving financial assistance from the Federal Transit Administration not be discriminated against, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of federal financial assistance, on grounds of race, color, or nation origin for federal financial assistance;

WHEREAS, the *GSATS' Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan* was developed in 2016; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and beneficial to update the Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan to incorporate current data that reflects the Myrtle Beach-Socastee SC/NC Urbanized Area and to ensure compliance with the latest transportation legislation (FAST Act) and FTA Circular 4702.1B guidance;

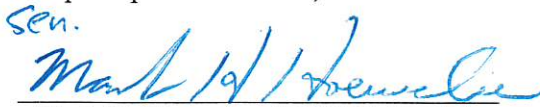
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study Policy Committee, that it adopts this Title VI-Environmental Justice Plan and endorses its policies and procedures.

THIS RESOLUTION WAS APPROVED BY THE GRAND STRAND AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY POLICY COMMITTEE ON MAY 31, 2019.


Rep. Stephen Goldfinch, Chairman

5-31-19
Date

Attested By:


Mark H. Hoeweler, GSATS MPO Director

5/31/19
Date

**GRAND STRAND AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY
POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES
May 31, 2019**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Hon. Barbara Blain-Bellamy [Adam Emrick]
Hon. Bob Childs
Mr. John Thomas
Hon. Debbie Smith
Hon. Jimmy Braswell
Hon. Huston Huffman
Rep. Lee Hewitt
Mr. Gary Loftus
Hon. Brenda Bethune [Carol Coleman]
Mr. Michael Chestnut
Mr. Darrell Bickhoff [Robert Sheehan]
Sen. Stephen Goldfinch
Rep. Russell Fry
Mr. Tony Cox
Hon. Walt Eccard

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS
PRESENT**

**STUDY TEAM/TAC MEMBERS
PRESENT**

Ms. Crystal McCutcheon, SCDOT
Mr. Daniel Newquist
Mr. Tom Britton
Ms. Holly Richardson
Mr. Boyd Johnson
Ms. Mary Catherine Hyman
Mr. Stacey Johnson, SCDOT
Ms. Elizabeth Tucker
Mr. Joey Skipper, SCDOT
Mr. Mark Hoeweler
Ms. Carol Coleman
Mr. Andy Markunas
Mr. Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Ms. Caitlin Marks, NCDOT
Ms. Marla Watson, SCDOT
Mr. Kevin Parks

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. Tom Stickler
Rep. William Bailey
Mr. Charles Swenson
Ms. Sarah Smith
Rep. Frank Iler

Adoption of the Agenda

Chairman Goldfinch called the meeting to order at the Surfside Beach Town Hall at 10:35 AM. It was noted that a quorum was present. Mr. Goldfinch welcomed everyone present and all members of the public that were in attendance for the meeting.

Chairman Goldfinch called for a motion to adopt the meeting agenda. **Rep. Hewitt made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cox. All members present voted in favor.**

Adoption of Minutes from February 15, 2019

The minutes from the February 15, 2019 GSATS Policy Committee meeting were presented for approval. **Mayor Childs made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented. Rep. Hewitt seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor.**

Public Comments

Chairman Goldfinch asked if there were any members of the public who signed up to address the committee during the public comment portion of the meeting. There were no members of the public who provided comments.

Projects Update (SCDOT)

Mr. Stacey Johnson, Assistant Program Manager with SCDOT, provided an update on the status of current and upcoming projects in the region. Of particular note are the following:

- The US 17 Business Access Management project in Surfside Beach is currently under construction. The work on the mainline will be paused for the Summer but work on the right of way and frontage roads can continue.
- Preliminary Engineering has begun for the Tournament Blvd/ McDowell Shortcut project. This project will be expedited by SCDOT. Sen. Goldfinch asked when construction would begin. Mr. Johnson said construction is on track for the Summer 2021.
- Right of way acquisition for the S -57/ S-111 project will commence this fall, with construction scheduled for 2021.
- The SC 707 widening project was completely open to traffic Memorial Day weekend.
- A public meeting to review conceptual designs for the RIDE III Carolina Bays Extension project to the NC State line is tentatively planned for late summer.
- A Public meeting has been scheduled for the Fred Nash Blvd RIDE III project on Jun 25th from 5-7pm at Socastee Elementary School.

- A public meeting is being finalized in July for the US 17 Bus Intersection in Garden City RIDE III project.
- A 2nd public meeting will be scheduled in the fall for the Conway Perimeter Phase II RIDE III project to review the selected corridor.
- A recent inspection on the bridge portion of the Carolina Bays Parkway ext South revealed some structural issues that will require correction. Mr. Johnson indicated that SCDOT is waiting on a revised schedule from the contractor. Sen. Goldfinch mentioned that SCDOT is currently in litigation with Flatiron, the project construction company. Mr. Cox indicated that Flatiron intends to subcontract the repair work which is limited to the decking of the bridge span over the Intracoastal Waterway. Mayor Brasswell suggested that it would be beneficial to have the project completed by the start of peak hurricane season.

Mr. Johnson then responded to questions from the committee. Rep Fry noted that while the recent pot hole blitz on Holmestown Rd provided some benefit, the whole SC 544 corridor needs repaving. Sen. Goldfinch asked Mr. Johnson to see if he could provide a summary of the percentage of funds that have been generated by the gas tax increase program is being committed to project work in the GSATS area at the next meeting. Rep. Hewitt asked if SCDOT has noticed any increase in the number of contractors that are working in SC. The Georgetown County CTC is having a hard time funding projects due to the ongoing increase in project costs. Mr. Cox indicated that he was aware that Jackson Co. from Charlotte is increasing activity across SC and hopefully additional contractors will see the potential of establishing a presence in SC.

Finally, Sen. Goldfinch encouraged SCDOT and the Study Team to begin looking at long-term solutions along the Queens Harbor segment of US 17 Bypass.

Below is a summary submitted by Mr. Johnson of all other projects within the GSATS Study Area.

MAY 23, 2019 GRAND STRAND AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (GSATS)

STUDY TEAM MEETING

PROJECT STATUS REPORT

GSATS PROJECTS

SC-65 Widening

Descr: Widening SC-65 from a two lane ditch section to a three lane section with curb and gutter and sidewalks extending from 17th Ave S. to 28th Ave. S.

Status: Project is currently under construction.

US 17 Business Access Management

Descr: Install raised landscaped median on US 17 Business within the town limits of Surfside Beach.

Status: Project is currently under construction.

US 501 Southbound Widening

Descr: Widening US 501 southbound from two to three lanes from Carolina Bays Parkway to Gardner Lacy Road, a distance of approximately 2.0 miles.

Status: Right-of-way acquisitions are underway.

US 17 Widening (Shetland to Backgate Interchange)

Descr: Widening US 17 from four to six lanes from Shetland Lane to Backgate Interchange, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles.

Status: Preliminary engineering is underway. Right-of-way acquisitions will begin in the spring of 2019.

Black River Road Widening

Descr: Widening Black River Road to three lanes from Willow Bank Road to Landgrave Street, a distance of less than 0.5 mile.

Status: Preliminary engineering is underway. Right-of-way acquisitions will begin in the summer of 2019.

Tournament Blvd & McDowell Shortcut (Round 3 Intersection Improvement)

Descr: Intersection Improvement at Tournament Blvd and McDowell Shortcut in Horry County.

Status: Preliminary engineering is underway.

S-57 & S-111 (Round 3 Intersection Improvement)

Descr: Intersection Improvement at S-57 (Wampee Rd) and S-111 Little River Rd) in Horry County.

Status: Preliminary engineering is underway. Right-of-way acquisitions will begin fall of 2019.

Riverwood Dr. & Old Kings Hwy (Round 3 Intersection Improvement)

Descr: Intersection Improvement at Riverwood Dr and Old Kings Hwy in Georgetown County.

Status: Preliminary engineering will begin Summer 2019.

Broadway/Oak/9th Ave (Round 3 Intersection Improvement)

Descr: Intersection Improvement at Broadway St. and North Oak St. and 9th Ave North in Horry County.

Status: Preliminary engineering will begin Summer 2019.

US 17 & 27th Ave (Round 3 Intersection Improvement)

Descr: Intersection Improvement at US 17 BUS (North Kings Hwy) and 27th Ave North in Horry County.

Status: Preliminary engineering will begin Summer 2019.

US 378 & 16th Ave (Round 3 Intersection Improvement)

Descr: Intersection Improvement at US 378 (Wright Blvd) and 16th Ave in Horry County.

Status: Preliminary engineering will begin Summer 2019.

Enhancements

Descr: Enhancements at various locations in the GSATS study area.

Status: Specific information is presented below for all projects currently under development:

River Oaks Multiuse Path

Preliminary engineering is currently underway.

Grand Park Linear Trail

Project will be let to construction in the spring of 2019.

NON-GUIDESHARE PROJECTS

SC Route 707 Widening (RIDE II)

Descr: Widening of SC Route 707 from a 2-lane shoulder section to a 5-lane curb and gutter facility with sidewalks from just south of Enterprise Road (S-26-926) in Horry County to US Route 17 in Georgetown County, a distance of approximately 9.2 miles. The project has been broken in to three phases: Phase I is from just south of Enterprise Road (S-26-926) to Salem Road. Phase II runs from Salem Road to the Horry/Georgetown County line. Phase III limits are from the Horry/Georgetown County line to US Route 17. All phases will be developed concurrently.

Status: The widening of Phase I is substantially complete and open to traffic. Construction efforts continue on the Collins Creek bridge and select noise walls on Phase II. Should be opened to traffic by this weekend.

Glenn's Bay Road (S-2-1240) Widening and Interchange at US 17 Bypass (RIDE II)

Descr: Widening of Glenn's Bay Road (S-26-1240) from a 2-lane shoulder section to a 3-lane curb and gutter facility with sidewalks from US Route 17 Bypass to US Route 17 Business, a distance of approximately 1.6 miles. The project will also include an interchange at US Route 17 Bypass and Glenn's Bay Road.

Status: The project is substantially complete and open to traffic. Final punch list items are currently being addressed.

Carolina Bays Parkway (SC-31) Extension to the NC State Line (RIDE III)

Descr: Extension of the Carolina Bays Parkway from its current terminus at SC Route 9 across the North Carolina state line to US 17. The proposed project is a new location, multilane freeway facility.

Status: The project team is actively gathering data that will be utilized in the development of the alternative corridors for the project. It is anticipated that the preliminary corridors will be presented at public information meeting in Summer 2019.

US 501 Corridor Improvements (RIDE III)

Descr: Widen US 501 from Gardner Lacy to SC 544 Interchange. Widening the existing 4-lane section to 6 lanes and improve signalized intersections with additional turn lanes and storage lengths.

Status: Environmental studies and the development of conceptual designs are currently underway.

SC Highway 9 Widening (East of Loris) (RIDE III)

Descr: Widen SC 9 for approximately 1.25 miles beginning east of Loris where the current 4-lane section terminates and extends to S-66 (SC Highway 66); traffic analyses will determine the typical section for capacity and safety improvements along the corridor.

Status: Environmental studies, traffic analysis, and the development of conceptual designs are in progress.

US 701 Widening (North of Conway) (RIDE III)

Descr: Widen existing US Highway 701 North of Conway in Horry County from the intersection of SC 319 to the intersection of SC 22. The length of the project is approximately 4.3 miles. The proposed design includes widening US 701 North to a five (5) lane section and including bike/pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and wider travel lanes where feasible.

Status: Efforts are underway on the preparation of right-of-way plans and the completion of the environmental document. Right-of-way acquisition will start Fall 2019.

Forestbrook Road Widening (RIDE III)

Descr: Widen Forestbrook Road (S-137) to a five lane section from US 501 to Dick Pond Road (S-616) with associated improvements to Dick Pond Road.

Status: Environmental studies, traffic analysis, and the development of conceptual designs are in progress. It is anticipated that the public information meeting will be held in July 2019.

Fred Nash Boulevard Widening and Extension (RIDE III)

Descr: Widen Fred Nash Boulevard to a three lane section and extend the roadway from its current terminus to a proposed intersection with Harrelson Boulevard. Improvements will include bicycle facilities.

Status: Surveys, environmental studies, traffic analysis, and the development of conceptual designs are in progress.

US 17 BUS Intersections in Garden City (RIDE III)

Descr: Intersection Improvements to the following three (3) intersections along US 17 Business in Garden City:

1. US 17 Business and Inlet Square Boulevard and Mt. Gilead Road
2. US 17 Business and Atlantic Avenue
3. US 17 Business and Garden City Connector

Status: Environmental studies, traffic analysis, and the development of conceptual designs are in progress. It is anticipated that the public information meeting will be held in July 2019.

US 701 Widening (North of Loris) (RIDE III)

Descr: Widen US Highway 701 for approximately 1.75 miles from Holly Street to SC Highway 9. A traffic analysis will determine the typical section for capacity and safety improvements along the corridor.

Status: Right-of-way plans are being developed and acquisition will begin Spring 2020.

US 501 Realignment (Myrtle Beach) (RIDE III)

Descr: Realign US Highway 501 from Broadway Street (local) to 7th Avenue North (local) in the City of Myrtle Beach.

Status: Right-of-way plans are being developed.

Conway Perimeter Road Phase II (RIDE III)

Descr: New Location 4-lane divided roadway west of Conway connecting US 378 at El Bethel Road to US 701.

Status: Comments from the March 28th public information meeting are being reviewed and written responses are being prepared for distribution. The preferred corridor will be selected and efforts made to analyze alternative alignments within the preferred corridor. A second public information meeting will be held late Fall 2019 to present alternative within the preferred corridor.

Southern Evacuation Lifeline (SELL) (RIDE III)

Descr: New Location freeway from US 501 at SC 22 to US 17 near the Horry/Georgetown County Line. RIDE III funding only includes the Environmental Document and purchase of some right of way based on

final alignment determined through the Federal Record of Decision (ROD).

Status: A consultant has been selected to preform services to complete the development of the environmental document for the project.

STATE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK (STIB) PROJECTS

Carolina Bays Parkway (SC Route 31) Extension

Descr: Extension of the Carolina Bays Parkway from its current terminus at SC Route 544 to SC Route 707, a distance of approximately 4.3 miles. The proposed project is a new location, multilane freeway facility that will include a bridge over the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway and interchanges at SC Route 544 and SC Route 707.

Status: Currently evaluating portion of the bridge that will need correction. We are awaiting a schedule from the prime contractor to determine completion date.

Projects Update (NCDOT)

Ms. Caitlin Marks provided an overview of project updates impacting the NC portion of the GSATS study area. She noted that as NCDOT is approaching the end of the fiscal year, the department is balancing the budget which has resulted in the delay of the interchange project at the US 17 Bypass/ US Business intersection in Shallotte. All other projects will be moving forward as scheduled including the Carolina Bays Parkway extension project. As of now, it is anticipated that a public meeting will be scheduled in October to review the preferred alternative corridor alignments. In addition there is a public meeting on June 24th for the Shallotte Superstreet project at Shallotte Town Hall and on July 8th for the NC 904/ US 17 superstreet project at Jessie Mae Monroe Elementary School. Rep. Iler asked if the residents of Brunswick Plantation will receive direct notification for the Hickman Rd superstreet project. Ms. Marks noted that they will receive a postcard with information on any public meetings that are scheduled.

Below is a summary of NCDOT projects that impact the regional transportation network.

If you have any questions, please contact Caitlin Marks at the Division 3 Office: (910) 341-2000 or cmmarks@ncdot.gov

FY 2020-21 UPWP Review

Mr. Hoeweler briefed the committee on the update of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) document which is due for adoption by the end of June. The UPWP is required by FHWA and FTA and outlines planning and administrative activities that the MPO will be working on over FY 2020-21. The document covers both SC and NC activities. The main categories of activities include Program Oversight, Short Range Planning, Special Area Studies, Plan Development, and Program Development/Maintenance. Each activity must align with one of the eleven planning factors outlined in the FAST Act. The draft UPWP has been submitted to all review agencies in both North Carolina and South Carolina and is currently posted for public comment until June 24, 2019.

With no further discussion, Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the GSATS FY 2020-21 UPWP. Rep. Fry seconded. All members voted in favor.

Transit 5310 Funding Application Review

Mr. Hoeweler introduced GSATS staff member Elizabeth Tucker to brief the committee on the Transit 5310 funding application cycle. This program is intended to enhance services for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. In this grant cycle there was \$296,000 available for funding. GSATS received four applications including Coast RTA, Neighbor 2 Neighbor, Brunswick Transit and Georgetown DSN. This was the first year that projects were submitted by entities serving Brunswick County. The staff recommended funding each of the proposals except Georgetown DSN which will be an alternate project, since it is already eligible for a separate funding source

With no further discussion, Rep. Fry made a motion to approve the recommendations for Transit 5310 funding as presented. Mr. Cox seconded. All members present voted in favor.

Title VI Plan Update

Ms. Tucker continued by briefing the committee on the Title VI Plan. This document is required to be updated every 3 years. It essentially outlines measures that GSATS will employ to minimize discrimination in all planning activities, including providing accommodations for those with special needs at public meetings. There were not many

changes since the last update except with edits reflecting changes in Board composition and regionwide demographic trends.

With no further discussion, Rep. Hewitt made a motion to adopt the Title VI Plan. Mayor Childs seconded. All members present voted in favor.

Transit Asset Management Plan Overview

Ms. Tucker continued by briefing the committee on the Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan. This plan was prepared by Coast RTA and outlines the condition of the vehicle fleet and transit facilities within the service area and provides an estimated replacement cycle on these agency assets. GSATS staff reviewed the plan and confirmed that all FAST Act requirements are addressed in the document.

With no further discussion, Mr. Cox made a motion to adopt the Transit Asset Management Plan. Rep. Fry seconded. All members present voted in favor.

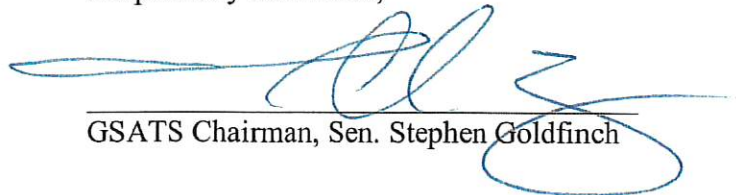
Safety Committee Update

Mr. Hoeweler then briefed the Policy Committee on the newly established Safety Committee. The first meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday June 11 at the Murrells Inlet Community Center. Representatives from law enforcement and EMS staff will be participating from both counties. The initial response to this committee has been very favorable. The plan is to meet quarterly and review frequent crash locations using aerial photography captured via drone. Staff will initially focus on getting this committee established in Horry and Georgetown Counties. Brunswick County TAC members have also expressed interest in the future.

Adjourn

With no further discussion Chairman Goldfinch called for a motion to adjourn. **Mr. Thomas made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Childs seconded. All members present voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.**

Respectfully Submitted,



GSATS Chairman, Sen. Stephen Goldfinch

11/15/2019
Date