

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Our future patterns of land use will be based on that of our growing highway system as surely as the human body is molded about its skeleton.

- Paul B. Sears

INTRODUCTION

Fayette County is showing the growing pains common to most counties of a rural nature experiencing rapid growth. From 1980 to 2000, Fayette County's population grew from 29,043 to 91,263, an increase of 214 percent. This growth has placed large volumes of traffic on rural roads and two-lane state highways not designed for such capacity. In addition to the growth in Fayette County, growth in surrounding counties is adding to the traffic volume in Fayette County. This growth in traffic has increased congestion and created safety problems, particularly at major intersections within municipal limits during morning and afternoon traffic peaks. Socio-economic factors, such as high automobile availability and two-worker households, also contribute to the increasing demand for transportation services and facilities. As Fayette County grows, its transportation facilities must be improved to accommodate the increasing demand.

In an effort to address transportation needs in Fayette County, the Fayette County Board of Commissioners contracted with the URS Corporation to update the Fayette County Transportation Plan. The update was completed in 2003. The municipalities within the county participated in the planning process. The plan recommends transportation improvements in both the unincorporated county and the municipalities. Timing for the improvements range from 2003 to 2025. The total cost for these improvements is approximately \$266 million. The transportation improvement projects defined in the plan are discussed under the section entitled Assessment of Current and Future Needs.

INVENTORY

The following section provides an inventory of Fayette County's existing transportation system. It details the county's inventory of highways and roads, bicycle and pedestrian ways, current transportation options, and railroad and airports.

Highways and Roads

Six major highways provide access to, from, and within Fayette County.

State Route 85 runs south from I-75, through Clayton County, into Fayette County north of Fayetteville. This four-lane highway continues south through Fayetteville where it narrows to two lanes and continues south into Coweta County. This is the most highly traveled state highway in the county and carries some 44,200 vehicles a day.

State Route 54 is the main east-west highway in the county. It extends from Coweta County on the west, through Peachtree City, eastward through Fayetteville, to Clayton County. SR 54 is a four lane, divided highway from SR 74 in Peachtree City to McDonough Road, east of Fayetteville. The sections west of SR 74 and east of McDonough Road remain two lanes. The most heavily traveled portions of this highway carry 33,000 vehicles a day.

State Route 74 is a four lane highway from Interstate 85 south to SR 54 in Peachtree City. South of SR 54, it becomes two lanes, ending at SR 85. This major access to

Interstate 85 and the Atlanta Metropolitan Area carries 31,600 vehicles a day.

State Route 314 extends southward from Hartsfield International Airport to SR 85 in Fayetteville. The southern portion of this highway (SR 279 to SR 85) is a four lane divided highway. The major commuting route for airport workers, this highway carries 22,400 vehicles a day.

State Route 279 runs south from I-285 in South Fulton County, entering Fayette County at SR 138. It proceeds southwest across SR 314 and ends at SR 85 north of the City of Fayetteville. SR 279 is a two-lane highway and carries 16,700 vehicles a day.

State Route 92 extends southward from Fulton County, running northwest to southeast through Fayetteville and Woolsey, and continuing into Spalding County. It is two lanes throughout Fayette County, except for the section with passing lanes on SR 92 north and the section in the City of Fayetteville where State Routes 85 and 92 merge. This highway carries commuter traffic from Griffin and Spalding County north to the airport and the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. Such traffic totals 13,800 vehicles a day.

The County's Thoroughfare Plan classifies streets by a hierarchical system based on street function. This classification system is based on the need to balance traffic movement and accessibility on different roadways. The classifications used by the Thoroughfare Plan include arterial, collector and local streets. The three categories of street classification are discussed below:

Arterial Streets - An arterial street is intended to provide swift, safe, and convenient traffic movement within and through the county. A major thoroughfare, an arterial street generally moves high volumes of traffic through the county and provides access to the interstate network. Arterial streets generally accommodate two or four lanes of moving traffic, often with turning lanes to accommodate traffic flow.

Collector Streets - Collector streets distribute traffic from arterials to local streets and adjacent land uses. They also collect traffic from local areas and distribute it to the arterial network. The collector network primarily serves localized areas. The main difference between collector and arterial streets is the length and type of trip accommodated.

Local Streets - A local street provides access to adjoining properties and circulation within a limited area. Local streets are usually low volume roads associated with subdivisions or areas which are primarily residential in nature. They comprise the highest percentage of total street miles within the county.

The Fayette County Road Department maintains approximately 468 miles of roads of which 61 miles are unpaved. The county maintains all roads in the unincorporated area, Brooks and Woolsey. The Town of Tyrone, the City of Fayetteville, and the City of Peachtree City perform maintenance on their roads, but the Fayette County Road Department provides repaving services to these cities by contract.

The interstate system presently serving the Atlanta Metropolitan Area does not pass through Fayette County. The closest interstate highway, Interstate 85, is approximately 1.5 miles to the north. Local access to Interstate 85 is provided through SR 74 and Palmetto Road.

Bicycle And Pedestrian Ways

Fayette County has a county-wide bicycle plan, as part of the Regional Transportation Plan

(RTP), on file with the Atlanta Regional Commission. This submittal allows the county to apply for any available state/federal funds, such as Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds. The bicycle plan generally provides bicycle path connections between county municipalities, recreational areas (Kiwanis and McCurry Parks), historic areas (Starr's Mill) and adjacent counties (Fulton and Clayton).

The first bicycle path is planned along Beauregard/Redwine Road. It is a joint project between the City of Fayetteville and Fayette County. It is partially funded through the RTP and Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) process. The path is planned to eventually connect the City of Fayetteville with Kiwanis Park in the unincorporated county.

Transportation Options

Fayette County's residents are dependent on the automobile as the major mode of transportation. Publicly funded transportation does not exist in Fayette County. Car and van pool use is minimal. A privately owned shuttle service transports commuters to downtown Atlanta from Peachtree City.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) completed a Commuter Rail Plan in September 1995 that recommended the phased implementation of six commuter rail lines using existing rail corridors. One proposed line would use the existing Seaboard System rail line through Fayette County with proposed stations in Tyrone and Peachtree City. The commuter rail service would terminate in Senoia. To date, the development of the Atlanta to Senoia commuter rail service through Fayette County has not been scheduled.

Railroads and Airports

Railroads. There are two rail lines running through Fayette County: Seaboard System and Norfolk Southern. The Seaboard System line runs north/south from Fulton County through Peachtree City to Senoia. Rail service to industrial areas in Peachtree City is provided by CSX Railroad on this line. The Norfolk Southern line runs east/west from Griffin through Brooks to Senoia. The Norfolk Southern line is no longer in use although the tracks are still in place.

Airports: Falcon Field in Peachtree City, within the confines of the Peachtree City industrial area, is the county's only general aviation airport. This airport is experiencing an increase in the amount of corporate usage. A 5,200 foot all-weather-lighted runway allows this airport to accommodate corporate jets and smaller commercial airplanes. There are also a number of small private landing fields located in the county.

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Fayette County will continue to depend on the automobile as the major mode of transportation within the scope of this plan. Therefore, maintaining and improving the efficiency of the existing road system is of paramount importance. Projects recommended in the updated Fayette County Transportation Plan include bridge projects, intersection improvements, and roadway projects which will maintain and improve the traffic flow.

Needed improvements are expensive and cannot be fully funded from the general fund. In addition, Fayette County is in competition with other metro counties for a finite amount of federal and state funds. The county should seek alternative funding sources such as a Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) or bonds for local road improvements.

The Fayette County Transportation Plan recommends transportation improvement projects. Each project includes a description of the need it fulfills, an estimated total cost for the project, and the cost allocation in terms of federal, state, and local shares. The Plan contains 10 bridge improvement projects, 20 intersection improvements, 28 roadway projects, seven streetscape and greenway projects, and six transit projects. The following is a summary of the projects in the Fayette County Transportation Plan.

Bridge Improvement Projects: Seven of the ten bridge improvement projects are located in the unincorporated county. These bridge projects are listed in Table T-1.

TABLE T-1 BRIDGE PROJECTS	
RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	PROJECT LOCATION
2003 - 2005	SR 85 at Morning Creek
2006 - 2010	Coastline Road at Whitewater Creek
2006 - 2010	Westbridge Road at Morning Creek
2006 - 2010	Kenwood Road at Morning Creek
2006 - 2010	Inman Road at Murphy Creek
2006 - 2010	McIntosh Road at the Flint River
2006 - 2010	SR 85 at Whitewater Creek

Source: Fayette County Transportation Plan - Final Report, 2003.

Intersection Improvement Projects: Nine of the 20 intersection improvement projects are located in the unincorporated county. One project, which is located in the Town of Brooks, will be the responsibility of Fayette County. These intersection improvements are listed in Table T-2.

TABLE T-2 INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS	
RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
2003 - 2005	Signal modification at SR 314 and SR 279
2003 - 2005	Intersection improvements at SR 54 and McDonough Road
2006 - 2010	Installation of signal at SR 92 and Gingercake Road
2006 - 2010	Install turning lanes and signal at S. Jeff Davis Drive and County Line Road
2006 - 2010	Intersection improvements at SR 92, Harp Road, and Seay Road
2006 - 2010	Intersection improvements at Antioch Road and McBride Road
2006 - 2010	Add left turn lanes where Kingswood Drive and Hilo Road intersects with SR 92

2006 - 2010	Realignment of intersection of SR 85 Connector and Woolsey-Brooks Road in the Town of Brooks
2011 - 2015	Realignment of intersection of Sandy Creek Road, Sams Drive, and Eastin Road
2011 - 2015	Realignment of intersection of Goza Road and Antioch Road

Source: Fayette County Transportation Plan - Final Report, 2003.

Roadway Improvement Projects: The Transportation Plan lists 28 total roadway projects. Thirteen of these 28 projects are located solely in the unincorporated County. Three are in both the unincorporated county and a municipality; one is a multi-jurisdictional Corridor Plan, and the remaining projects are located solely within a municipality. A summary of the projects is listed in Table T-3.

TABLE T-3 ROADWAY PROJECTS		
RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
2003 - 2005	SR 74 Corridor Plan	It is recommended that a multi-jurisdictional master plan be developed for the SR 74 north corridor. The jurisdictions include Fayette County, Fulton County, Fairburn, Tyrone, and Peachtree City. The issues include traffic growth, congestion and safety, level of vehicular access, and corridor management.
2006 - 2010	SR 74	Widen SR 74 to a four lane divided highway from SR 54 south to SR 85. This is a GDOT project. The project is located in the unincorporated county and the City of Peachtree City.
2006 - 2010	SR 54	Widen SR 54 to a four lane divided highway from McDonough Road east to US 41/Tara Blvd. in Clayton County. This is a GDOT project.
2006 - 2010	McDonough Road (SR 920)	Widen McDonough Road to a four lane divided highway from SR 54 east to US 41/Tara Blvd. in Clayton County. This is a GDOT project.
2006 - 2015	East Fayetteville Bypass	This project will create a eastern bypass around the City of Fayetteville through a north-south connection from SR 92 to SR 85 and SR 279 to relieve congestion in downtown Fayetteville. This project supplies a connection from south SR 92 through Inman Road, County Line Road, a new road connecting County Line Road with Corinth Road, and Corinth Road to SR 85 and SR 279. It is proposed that the portion from South Jeff Davis Road north to SR 85 and SR 279 be a four lane roadway.
2006 - 2015	Northside Parkway	This project will provide a continuous east-west route through the northern section of the county from SR 85 to Palmetto Road. Operational improvements on Kenwood Road which involve various intersection and turn lane improvements between SR 92 and SR 279 will facilitate a connection to the East Fayetteville Bypass. Intersection improvements are recommended at Lee’s Mill Road and Sandy Creek Road and Jenkins Road and Sandy Creek Road, and the reconstruction of turn lanes along Jenkins and Sandy Creek Roads. The extension of either Jenkins Road or Sandy Creek Road to Trickum Creek Road will provide a connection to Palmetto Road. This portion of the project is in the unincorporated county and the Town of Tyrone.

TABLE T-3, continued. ROADWAY PROJECTS		
RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
2006 - 2015	West Fayetteville Bypass	This project will create a western bypass around the City of Fayetteville through a north-south connection from SR 92 to SR 85 to relieve congestion in downtown Fayetteville. This project provides a connection from SR 92 to Sandy Creek Road through a new road which runs south from Westbridge Road to Tillman Road. A new road runs south from Sandy Creek Road across SR 54 to Lester Road. The last portion of the connection utilizes two alternatives. Alternative one would consist of extending Lester Road south across Ebenezer Road to Harp Road. Alternative two involves extending Ebenezer Church Road east across Redwine Road to Harp Road.
2011 - 2015	SR 314	Widen SR 314 to a four lane divided highway from SR 279 north to Norman Drive in Fulton County. This is a GDOT project.
2011 - 2015	SR 85	Widen SR 85 to a four lane divided highway from SR 92 to SR 74. This is a GDOT project.
2011 - 2025	SR 92	This project involves the installation of turn lanes and intersection improvements from McBride Road south to the Spalding county line. This is a GDOT project.
2011 - 2015	Hampton Road Realignment	This project includes the relocation of Hampton Road creating a new intersection with SR 92 and providing a new roadway connecting to Woolsey-Brooks Road. This project is in the unincorporated county and the Town of Woolsey.
2021 - 2025	Tyrone and Palmetto Roads	Widen Tyrone and Palmetto Roads from SR 74 to I-85 to four lanes to accommodate future demand as this roadway provides a connection to Interstate 85. This project is in the unincorporated county and the Town of Tyrone and will require coordination with Coweta County.

Source: Fayette County Transportation Plan - Final Report, 2003.

School/Hospital Access Road Project: The Land Use Plan Map indicates a proposed access road to be located on the north side of, and parallel to, SR 54 between Tyrone Road and the hospital property. Access will be provided to the future high school site. The proposed further eastern extension of this road to the West Fayetteville Bypass (see Table T-3, above) would provide alternative access to the hospital as well as offer additional traffic circulation options.

MacDuff Parkway Extension: The Land Use Plan Map indicates the extension of MacDuff Parkway from its current terminus in Peachtree City connecting through a portion of the unincorporated county to Kedron Drive, also in Peachtree City.

Streetscape and Greenway Projects: The Redwine Road Multi-Use Path is the only streetscape and greenway project in the Transportation Plan located in unincorporated Fayette County. A portion of this project is also located in the City of Fayetteville.

Transit Projects: The transit projects identified in the Transportation Plan involve Dial-A-Ride reimbursements and the previously mentioned Atlanta to Senoia commuter rail service. Dial-A-Ride reimbursements are used to provide transportation services to senior citizens.

In addition to the improvements identified in the Transportation Plan, **pedestrian and bicycle routes** should be expanded and developed as alternative transportation opportunities. The county should consider requiring sidewalks or walking paths in residential subdivisions. The county would have to develop criteria as to the size or zoning category of residential subdivisions which would require sidewalks or walking paths. Efforts should be explored to maintain the right-of-ways of rail lines which someday may be abandoned. These right-of-ways could be purchased and used for recreational trails until such time as they are needed again. Property acquired through the Fayette County Greenspace Program could provide pedestrian and bicycle routes. The county should continue to seek ISTEA funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

According to the 2000 Census, approximately two thirds of Fayette County’s workforce drives out of the county for employment. As the County continues to grow, the feasibility of **transportation options** for commuting should be investigated.

At this time, **rail and airport transportation** appear to be adequate. Existing rail lines serve industrial areas located in Tyrone and Peachtree City. Falcon Field is located in the Peachtree City industrial area where the greatest concentration of corporate users are also located.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, GUIDELINES

The following goal, objective, and policy statements presented in this section emphasize the need to maximize the efficiency of the existing and future Fayette County transportation network. Following the goal is a listing of objectives and policies which address specific issues. Recommendations or guidelines which suggest courses of action for addressing these issues, are also provided.

Goal for Transportation: Growth should be balanced with the supporting transportation infrastructure. Fayette County will continue to develop a transportation system to move people and goods efficiently while minimizing the environmental impact and community disruption. Further, the county should establish a framework to ensure the improvement and further development of the transportation system. Sidewalks and trails should be developed as an enhancement to transportation facilities.

Objective T-1: **Fayette County should provide a road system that provides adequate local access and capacity for through movements, consistent with the financial, social, and environmental constraints of the County.**

- Policy a. Ensure that the street network is planned, designed, and operated in adherence to the Functional Classification System described in the Transportation Element.

- Policy b. Provide a street network level of service as high as practical: the collector and arterial street system should operate at no lower than Level of Service “C” on an average daily basis, or lower than Level of Service “D” on a peak hour basis. (Note: Levels of Service are “A” (free flow of traffic), “B” (stable flow, some speed restrictions), “C” (stable flow, restricted speed), “D” (approaching unstable flow), “E” (unstable flow) and “F” (forced flow), reflecting factors such as speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, and delay.)

- Policy c. Continue to provide new roadway construction and other facility improvements which meet Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) standards for inclusion in the State highway system.

Policy d.	Pursue advanced acquisition of land for future roadway rights-of-way in order to minimize project costs and impacts on established neighborhoods.
Policy e.	Consider funding intersection improvements when highway funding is insufficient to permit the improvement of full segments, or if the level of service is low, or if there is a high accident occurrence rate.
Policy f.	Provide for the synchronization of traffic signals where appropriate to improve traffic flow and reduce pollution associated with idling vehicles.
Objective T-2:	A comprehensive network of trails and sidewalks should be provided as an integral element of the overall transportation network.
Policy a.	Consider the provision of matching funds for pedestrian, bicycle, and hiking trail system components in accordance with the Fayette County Bike and Pedestrian Plan element of the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). In addition, establish pedestrian, bicycle, and hiking trails in conjunction with road improvements, abandoned railways and stream valleys.
Policy b.	Provide nonmotorized facility improvements in accordance with standards delineated by the GDOT and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).
Policy c.	Consider the provision of bicycle and pedestrian features, including clearly marked sidewalks and trails, and marked crosswalk and pedestrian signals, in the construction and reconstruction of roads and bridges.
Objective T-3:	The programming of improvements to the transportation system should be sensitive to the county's identified land use goals and objectives.
Policy a.	Recognize anticipated future levels of demand based on the land use plan and operating conditions, as well as existing conditions, when making programming decisions.
Objective T-4:	Transportation facilities and services should be provided in a manner that minimize community disruption and adverse environmental impacts.
Policy a.	Use all reasonable means to minimize adverse impacts of existing and planned transportation facilities and services on environmental and historic resources and neighborhood stability.
Objective T-5:	Fayette County should work to ensure adequate financing for maintaining its transportation system and for its transportation system's improvements.
Policy a.	Develop and implement a responsible financial plan that identifies existing and new funding mechanisms to achieve the County's transportation system objectives.
Policy b.	Pursue increased state and federal support for road improvement projects.

Policy c.	Supplement state and federal funding of secondary roadways and other high priority projects, and continue local funding initiatives.
Policy d.	Increase funding for pedestrian, bicycle and hiking trails, including state and federal sources with the realization that state and federal funding will require a County match ranging from 20 to 40 percent.
Policy e.	Seek multi-jurisdictional funding sources for transportation facilities and services.
Objective T-6:	Ensure public safety for the users of transportation facilities and services and for the general public.
Policy a.	Incorporate medians and separate turning lanes in the design of roadways having four or more travel lanes.
Policy b.	Upgrade existing roadways to correct unsafe conditions along segments which have substandard geometries such as horizontal and vertical alignments with inferior sight distances. Upgrades could include side clearances, shoulder widenings, and guardrail installations. Incorporate safety features into new transportation facilities both for the users and for the general public.
Policy c.	Reduce conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists and correct unsafe conditions for walking and bicycling, where feasible. This could be accomplished by providing separate pedestrian and bike paths, walk/don't walk signalization, etc.
Objective T-7:	Fayette County should, to the extent consistent with other county goals and objectives, maximize the efficiency with which each facility within the transportation system fulfills its assigned function.
Policy a.	Maximize the efficiency of existing roads through low-cost strategies to increase capacity such as channelization, turning lanes, signalization, and signage.
Policy b.	Preserve and enhance the efficiency of the arterial network by reducing and consolidating private entrances, median crossovers, and similar disruptions to traffic flow. Also improve intersection efficiency by providing appropriate turning lanes and signalization.
Policy c.	Increase neighborhood safety on subdivision streets. Work with local law enforcement agencies, county departments, and neighborhoods to implement Traffic Calming and other measures where needed or practical. Examples of Traffic Calming techniques include deflecting the vehicle path by adding curves and/or traffic circles; changing the pavement surface, which demands driver attention and reduces the comfortable driving speed; and adding standard traffic control devices such as STOP signs, turn-movement prohibitions, traffic signals, and reducing the posted speed limit.
Objective T-8:	Preserve land needed to accommodate planned transportation facilities.

- Policy a. Establish right-of-way requirements and preserve the land for future roadway improvements.
- Policy b. Prepare engineering plans for future transportation improvements as soon as feasible in order to clarify and secure right-of-way requirements and to develop improved cost estimates.

Objective T-9: Periodically review and update the transportation plan.

- Policy a. Monitor changes in travel patterns, traffic, and the provision of transportation facilities and services. Evaluate the transportation plan’s ability to address future travel needs as part of the periodic review process.
- Policy b. Conduct major corridor level and community-wide transportation planning studies in an effort to refine the plan and comprehensively address system-wide transportation needs within the County.
- Policy c. Consider regional travel patterns when formulating and implementing the County’s transportation plan with consideration of ARC and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) transportation policies. Fayette County should address the transportation challenges associated with continuing trends in intra-county commuting patterns.