

GIS and Transportation Planning

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is much more than computer generated maps. GIS provides a visual instrument that identifies areas of study and provides a detailed tool for transportation planning and analysis within the FLATS area. The Florence County GIS Department plays a **HUGE** role in the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Using a GIS system, you can link attribute data (information) such as demographics to a location. For example, you can link property owners to the physical location of their home. You may then layer the information to explain the relationships between data. You can show the location of elementary age children and their proximity to elementary schools on a map. This type of tool helps decision makers determine where bus routes are necessary and where sidewalks would be helpful as children travel to school. GIS is a tool to help answer questions such as "how many robberies occurred within a specific area in a certain period of time?" A geographic information system (GIS) could provide the answer.

GIS data works together to create a comprehensive overview of our community. The system allows Florence County to make more informed decisions and better serve the community in urban planning, economic development, voting services, resource and asset management, environmental impact assessment, crime analysis, cartography, public works, emergency services and logistics. Even though these examples may not involve transportation issues per se, hopefully, it presents a clearer picture of the power of GIS. The following will show how GIS integrates effectively with transportation planning.

The FLATS GIS staff provides digital data and prepares maps

on a daily basis as necessary for many Florence County Departments, County Officials and the public. Some of the map layers related to transportation that this department maintains are:

1. Roads
 - Speed Limits
 - Address Ranges
 - Traffic Controls
 - Bridges
2. Address Points
3. Parcel Boundaries
4. Building Permits
5. Major Locations

Many Florence County Transportation Agencies and County Departments depend on the FLATS GIS staff for digital data to assist them in adequately serving the citizens of Florence County. These agencies and departments include but are not limited to:

1. The Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
2. Florence County Law Enforcement
3. Florence County E911 Dispatch
4. Florence County Fire Departments
5. Florence County Emergency Management Services

The FLATS staff is excited about the development of a new transportation planning tool. In the upcoming fiscal year, the FLATS GIS staff will begin developing a Transportation Planning Application website. This is being developed to serve as an "easy-to-use" one stop shop for creating transportation planning data and analyzing that data. Included will be a tool to plot growth trends, a tool to update road segment



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The Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS) is the metropolitan planning organization servicing a population of 124,316 from within two counties. The FLATS Study Team provides recommendations to the Policy Committee which has final local approval and authority. This committee consists of voting and non-voting members.

VOTING

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Mike Wooten
Commissioner, SCDOT Seventh
Congressional District

Sherwin Welch
Chair, County Transportation Council

Glynn Willis
Councilman, City of Florence

NON-VOTING

Charles MacNeil, Director, Pee Dee
Regional Transportation Authority

Ron Patton, Chief Engineer for Location
& Design, SCDOT

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Bob Lee
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Chair, Pee Dee Regional Airport
Authority

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Dennis Townsend
Administrator, SCDOT Engineering
District 5

Drew Griffin
Manager, City of Florence

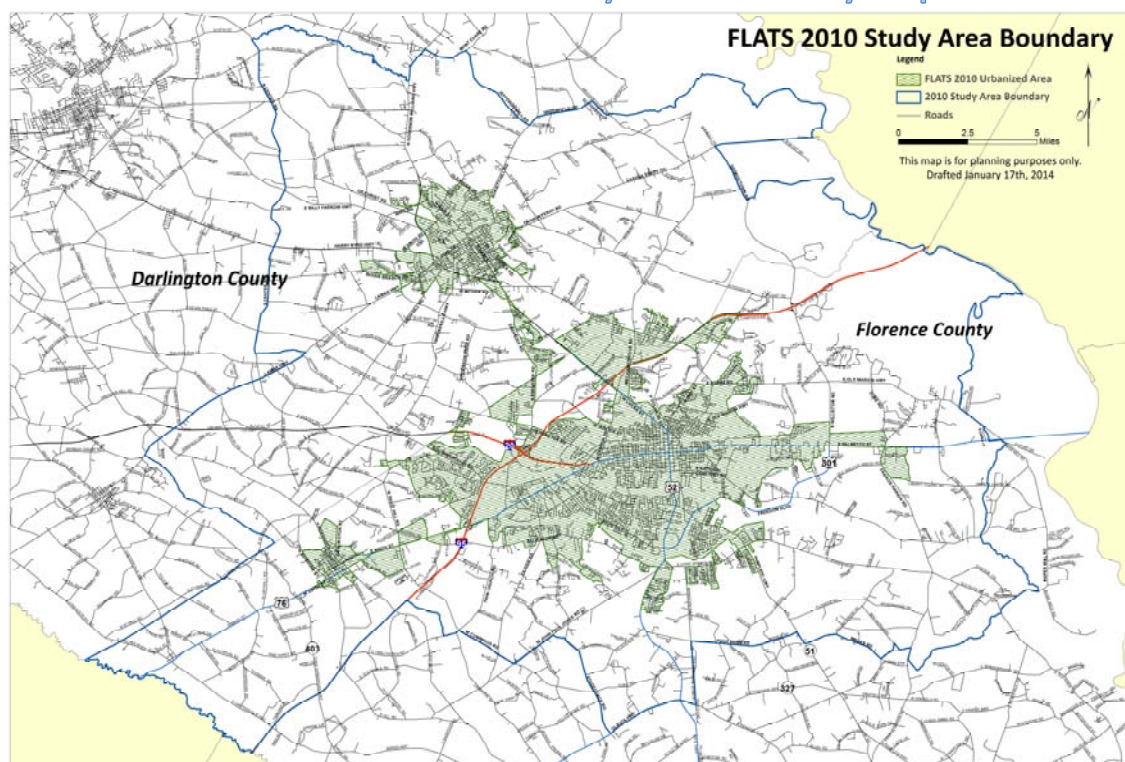
Drew Chaplin
Chair, City of Florence Planning
Commission

attributes including sidewalks, congestion, freight corridor, laneage, classification and maintenance among others. Tools to summarize trends by Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) and help in using GIS data to estimate and project the TAZ Socioeconomic variables will also be developed. In an effort to facilitate a healthy, sustainable community, transportation planning should be coordinated with land use and socioeconomic data.

The Transportation Planning website will be designed to cut down on some of the redundant tasks involved in editing and analyzing transportation data and make the process as easy and accurate as possible. Optimistically, the customization of the application will eliminate some of the overhead of using and learning standard GIS software.

The Florence County GIS Department's home webpage is located at: <http://gis.florenceco.org/>. There are many links from this page that will allow the user to see the wide array of data and applications provided by the GIS Department. Keep an eye out for the release of the FLATS viewer. This site will show completed and on-going FLATS projects including roads, trails and highway beautification projects. In addition, it will highlight development trends in the FLATS Study Area Boundary. Viewers will be allowed to leave comments and give thoughts on future projects.

FLATS Urbanized and Study Area Boundary Map



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