

1. Introduction

This report documents the findings of a study by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to update the 1991 Catawba County Thoroughfare Plan. This study was initiated in September of 2000 in response to the request from Catawba County. The study culminated in the adoption of the updated Catawba County Thoroughfare Plan by the County Board of Commissioners on October 25, 2003 and by the North Carolina Board of Transportation on June 3, 2004. The adopted Thoroughfare Plan is shown in Figure 1-1

Thoroughfare planning enables a transportation system to be progressively developed to adequately meet the transportation needs of a community, as land development and traffic volumes increase. Planning for future transportation needs prevents unnecessary costs and impacts to the physical, social, and economic environment. Thoroughfare plan studies are conducted based on the principles outlined in Appendix A.

The purpose of this study was to examine the present and future transportation needs of Catawba County in order to develop an updated thoroughfare plan. The recommendations proposed herein are based on existing roadway conditions and projected growth the County over a twenty-five years planning period. Since actual growth rates and patterns may differ from those anticipated, it may become necessary to update the thoroughfare plan frequently to respond to these changes.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation and Catawba County are jointly responsible for the implementation of the thoroughfare plan. For the planning effort to be effective, the County and State must cooperate in protecting, by various legal means (guidelines set forth in Chapter 5), the right-of-way needed for future roadway improvements. Since transportation needs throughout the State exceed the available funding, local officials should aggressively pursue funding for the County's desired projects.