



EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

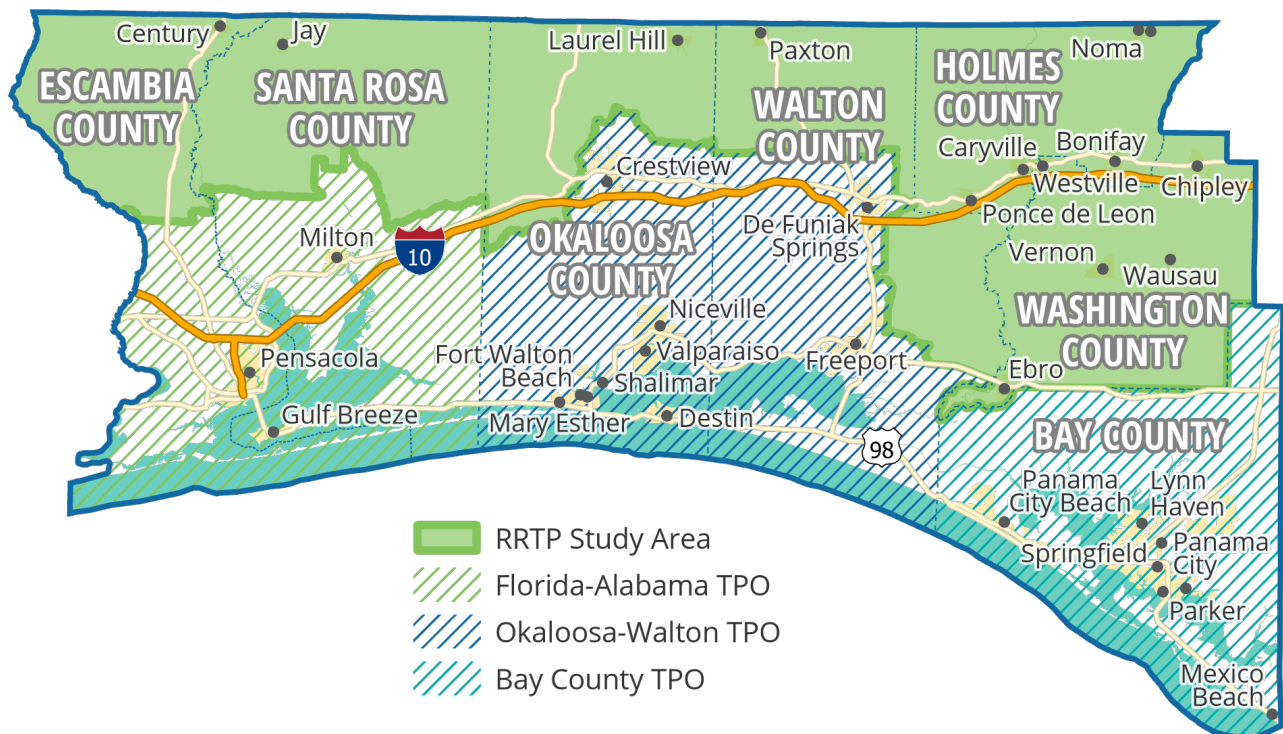
REGIONAL RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

"TPOs are encouraged to plan for and coordinate with rural governmental entities both within their planning boundaries as well as those areas outside of the current boundaries that are impacted by transportation movements between regions." – FDOT Planning Emphasis Areas

Project Purpose and Overview

The Regional Rural Transportation Plan (RRTP) serves as a blueprint for maintaining and enhancing the region's rural transportation system. Under a pilot project task handed down by District Three of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), staff at the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) brought the region's rural communities together for discussion and collaboration. Through this process, the Regional Rural Transportation Plan (RRTP) was established outlining the transportation needs of these rural areas. This plan functions similarly to the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Long Range Transportation Plan process. It covers a 20-year planning horizon, prioritizes short- and long-range projects for consideration in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and meets the goals of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP).

The plan's study area includes the rural portions of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties; and the entirety of Holmes and Washington Counties.



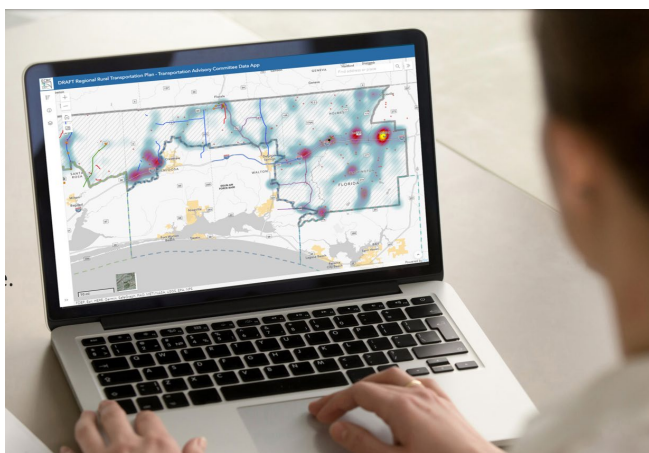


Rural Area Collaboration

As part of the RRTP pilot project, ECRC created a process for rural governments to collaborate, discuss, educate, and document needed rural transportation improvements. A Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was established, which includes representatives from the rural study area's local jurisdictions and agency partners. This committee was tasked with gathering transportation project needs from local governments and assisting ECRC with the creation of evaluation criteria. The TAC held public meetings regularly throughout plan development and made final recommendations to the Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) Board. They will continue to implement and update the RRTP.

Rural Area Needs Plan and Priorities

The RRTP Needs Plan includes a ranked list of short- and long-term projects submitted by local governments and partners within the study area. The projects received were placed in the following categories – **Capacity, Resurfacing, Bridges, Safety, Bike/Ped/Trails, Park & Ride Lots, and Freight/Rail**. The top five ranked projects in each category can be considered short-range needs (5 years), and the remainder are long-range needs (6 to 20 years). An interactive map that the public can easily use, including all Needs Plan projects and relevant data layers used throughout plan development, can be accessed on the project website.



Plan Updates

The RRTP Needs Plan will be evaluated annually. As funding mechanisms are identified and projects are funded, and/or new projects are identified, existing projects may move off the ranked lists or be reranked. Major RRTP updates will include a review of all plan components and are anticipated to occur every five years.

For more information on the RRTP, please visit www.ecrc.org/RRTP.