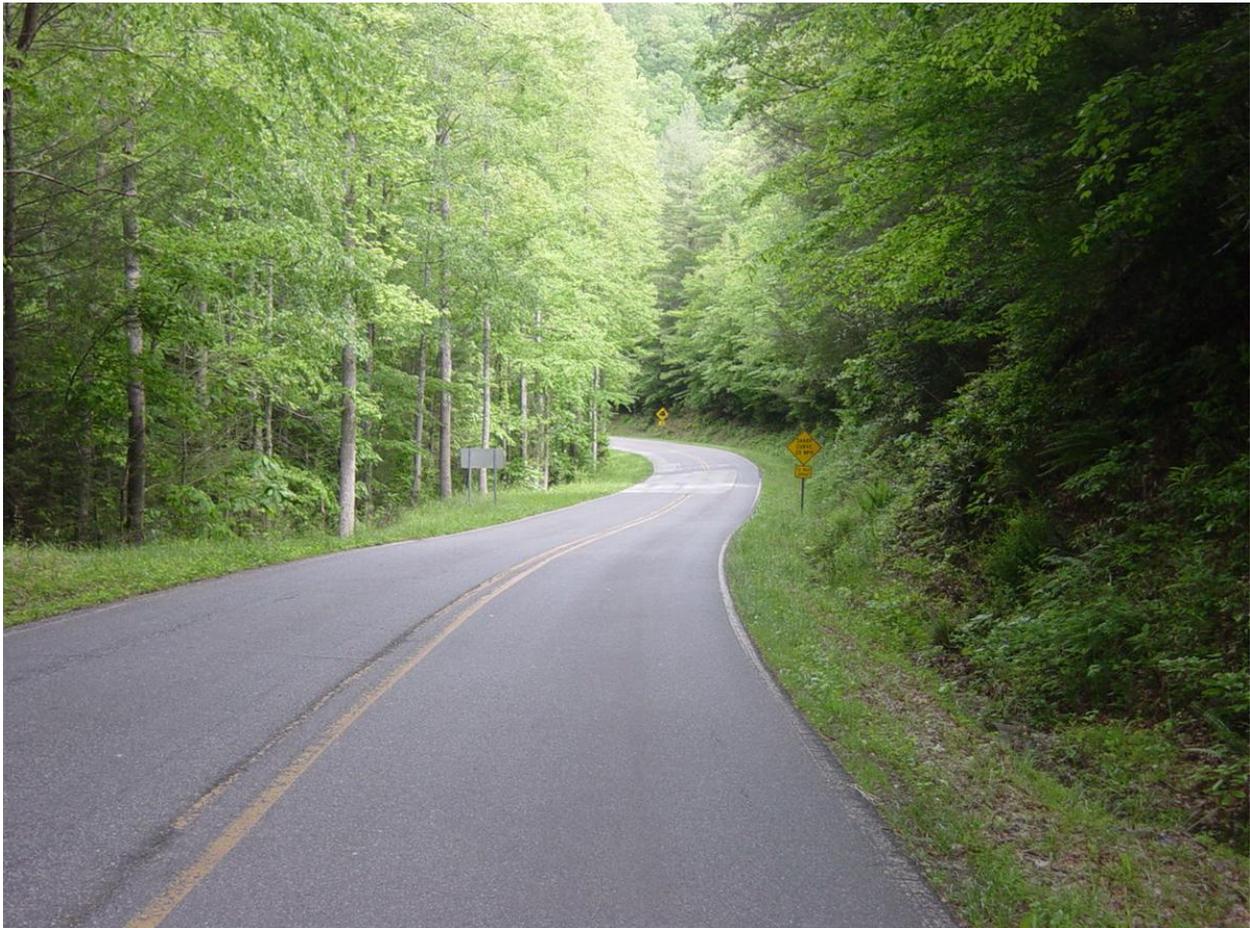




2015 Graham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Proposed Amendments – November 2019



BACKGROUND

Following adoption of the Graham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in early 2015, a multi-disciplinary Project Team was formed to re-start work on the Corridor K (A-0009) project. The Project Team was instructed to use information learned in previous work, but to start with a fresh approach to the project by identifying the transportation needs of the area, and then identifying solutions to those needs. The Project Team conducted studies and held numerous meetings over the next several years. In early 2019, a Draft Design Study Report was published showing multiple scenarios for Corridor K as well as high-level assessments of the potential impacts of each scenario. A series of public workshops and stakeholder meetings were held to get public input on the Draft Design Study Report scenarios.

One outcome was that Corridor K was no longer envisioned as a relocation of US 74. It was determined that US 74 would remain in the Nantahala gorge, and that the Corridor K project would consist of improving US 129, NC 143, and NC 28 on existing facilities or new location.

In September 2019, the NCDOT Board of Transportation adopted the 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which included updated descriptions of A-0009 to reflect the work of the Project Team. The designation “US 74 Relocation” was removed from the STIP and replaced with the following: “Upgrade roadway to include existing facilities and new location”. Section A-0009A is described as “US 19 Business in Andrews to US 129” and Section A-0009C is described as “US 129 to NC 28 at Stecoah” and includes the former Section A-0009B.

REASON FOR CTP AMENDMENT

Due to the changes in project direction, it is necessary to amend the Graham County CTP to be consistent with the Draft Design Study Report, public input, and the current STIP. Additionally, adding US 129, NC 143, and NC 28 to the National Highway System will enable the Project Team to apply for additional federal grants to fund the project. The proposed revisions to the Graham County CTP Highway Maps are attached and summarized below:

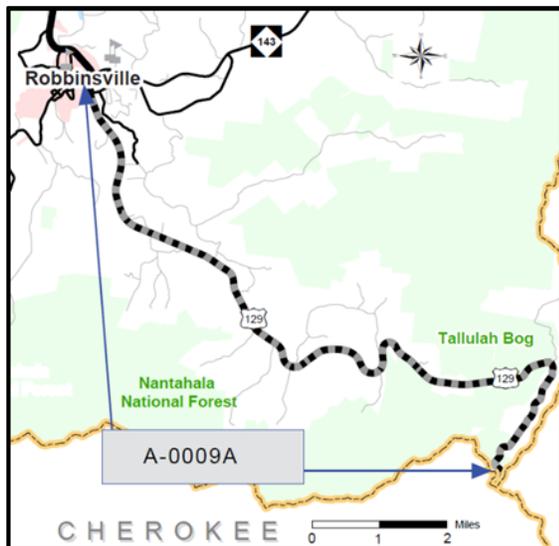
- Remove “US 74 Relocation” from the description of Corridor K
- Updated Corridor K Descriptions:
 - Change **US 129** to “Other Major Thoroughfare Needs Improvement”
 - Change **NC 143** to “Other Major Thoroughfare Needs Improvement”
 - Change **NC 28** to “Other Major Thoroughfare Needs Improvement”
- Add Tatham Gap Connector: Add a new project recommendation connecting US 19 in Andrews to US 129 in Graham County over Tatham Gap in the same location as the former A-0009A section.

HIGHWAY RECOMMENDATION REVISIONS:

- **Future US 74 Proposed Improvements:** This project has been removed based on the decision to keep US 74 in its current location.
- **US 129/NC 143/NC 28 Proposed Improvements:** Recommend improving these facilities to two-lane major thoroughfares with climbing lanes:
 - Improve **US 129** from US 74 to NC 143;
 - Improve **NC 143** from US 129 to NC 28; and
 - Improve **NC 28** from NC 143 to the existing four-lane section of NC 28 in Stecoah.
- **Tatham Gap Connector:** Recommend new location boulevard connecting US 19 in Andrews to US 129 in Graham County over Tatham Gap in the same location as the former A-0009A section.
- It is recommended that NC 28, NC 143 and US 129 be added to the Federal Highway Administration's National Highway System (NHS).

PROJECT PROPOSAL REVISIONS:

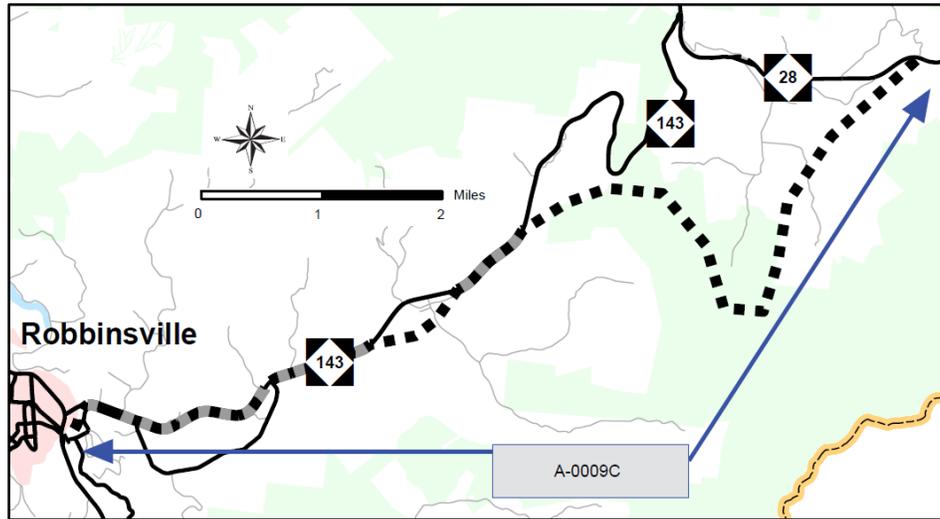
US 129 Proposed Improvements from US 74 to NC 143, Local ID: A-0009A



The CTP project A-0009A recommends improving US 129 as a two-lane major thoroughfare with climbing lanes from US 74 in Topton to NC 143 in Robbinsville.

These improvements should provide the transportation infrastructure necessary for the well-being of local residents by improving mobility and reliability between Robbinsville and Topton. Refer to Appendix I of the 2015 Graham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for more detailed information on other alternatives evaluated for this project as part of the 2015 CTP.

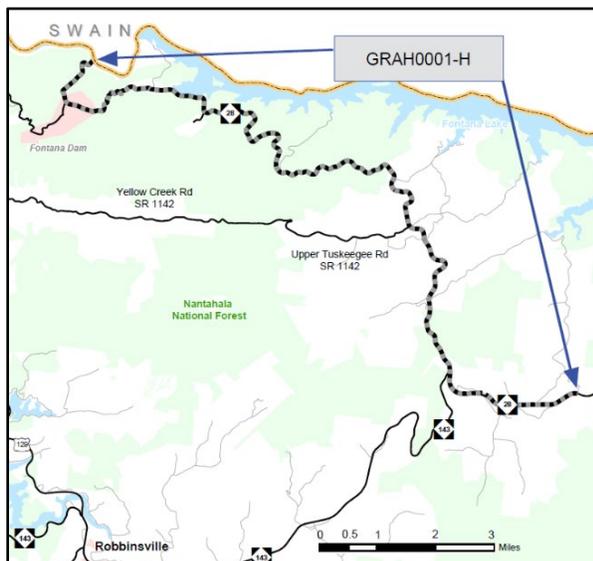
NC 143/NC 28 Proposed Improvements from US 129 to the existing four lane section of NC 28 in Stecoah, Local ID: A-0009C



The CTP Project A-0009C recommendation is a combination of new location and improvements to existing NC 143 from US 129 in Robbinsville to the existing four-lane divided section of NC 28 in Stecoah. This facility is recommended to be a two-lane major thoroughfare with climbing lanes.

These improvements should provide the transportation infrastructure necessary for the well-being of local residents by improving mobility and reliability between Robbinsville and Stecoah and points further east. Refer to Appendix I of the 2015 Graham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for more detailed information on other alternatives evaluated for this project as part of the 2015 CTP.

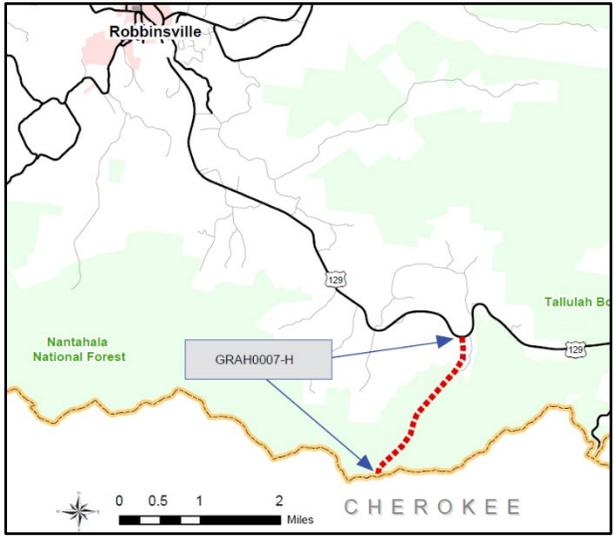
NC 28 (Fontana Road) from the existing four-lane divided section of NC 28 to Swain County, Local ID: GRAH0001-H



The CTP project GRAH0001-H recommends modernizing NC 28 (Fontana Road) from the existing four-lane divided section of NC 28 near Stecoah to the Swain County line. The road should be upgraded to modern design standards for lane width and shoulder width. Deficient curves and sight distances should be corrected where feasible. Additional improvements desired include passing lanes and slow-vehicle pull-offs.

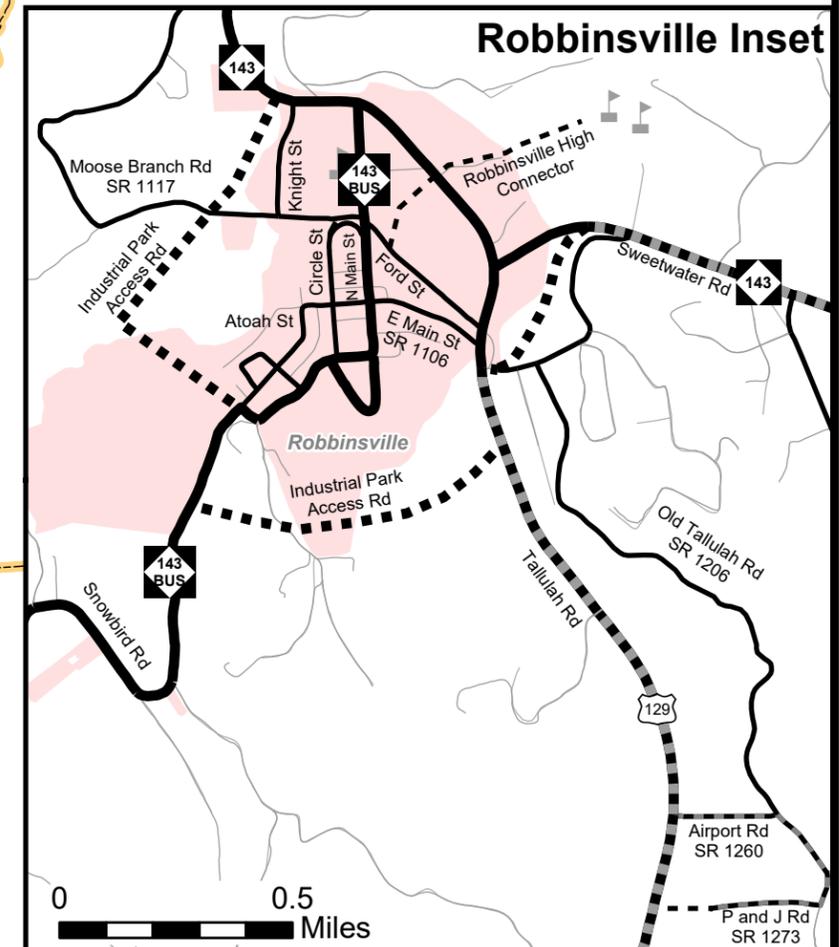
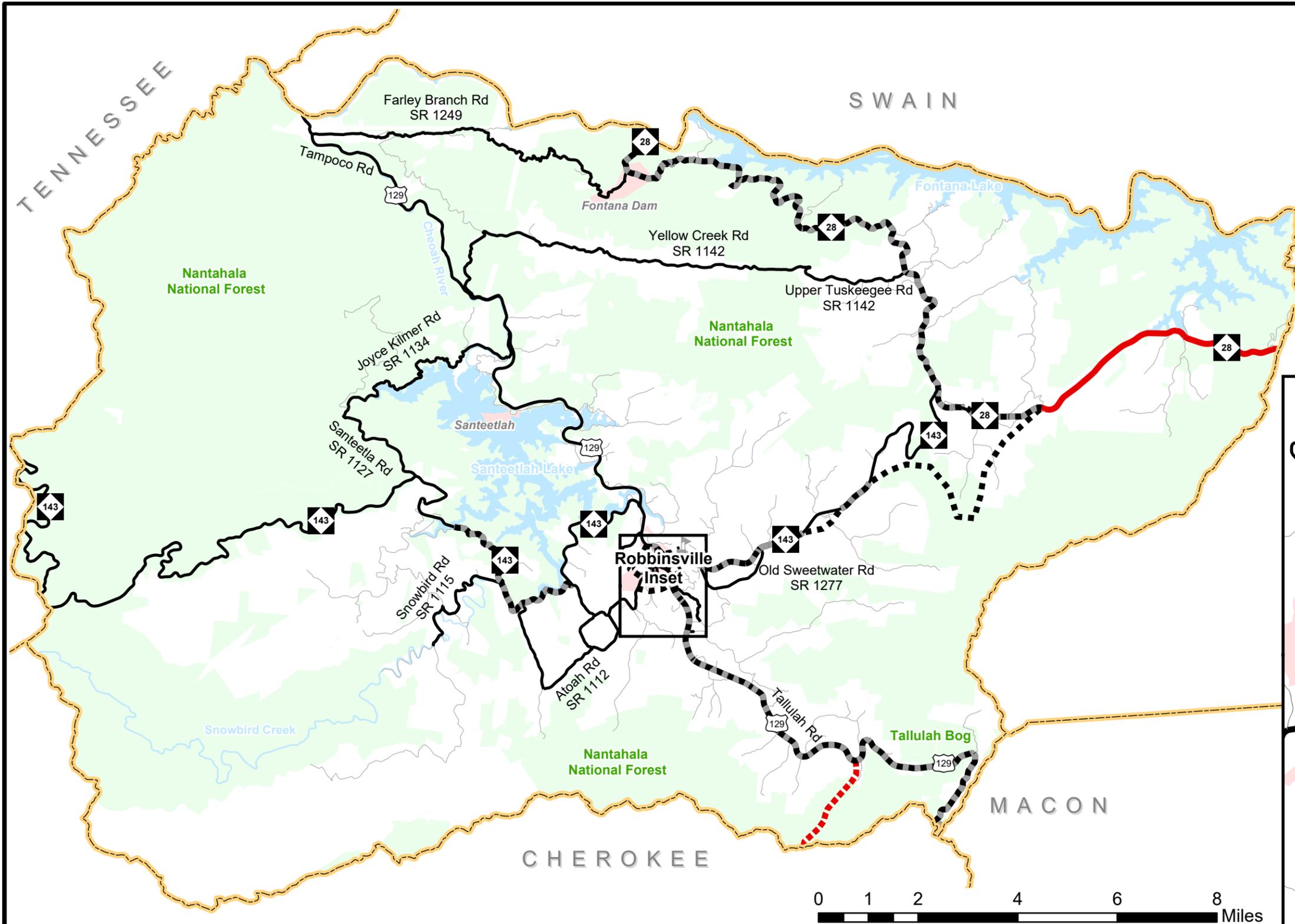
Improvements to this facility would improve mobility and safety for all users throughout Graham County and into Swain County.

Tatham Gap Connector, GRAH0007-H



The Tatham Gap Connector recommendation is a two-lane boulevard parkway-style facility. The new location route connects US 19 in Andrews to US 129 south of Robbinsville. This recommendation is now a standalone project and not part of A-0009.

This new connection would improve travel time between Andrews and Robbinsville and provide an alternate route in the event of road closures on US 129 (Tallulah Road). With a major hospital and other medical services located in Cherokee County which are not found in Graham County, this connection reliability is critical.



<p>Freeways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ——— Existing - - - - - Needs Improvement · · · · · Recommended <p>Expressways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ——— Existing - - - - - Needs Improvement · · · · · Recommended 	<p>Boulevards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ——— Existing - - - - - Needs Improvement · · · · · Recommended <p>Other Major Thoroughfares</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ——— Existing - - - - - Needs Improvement · · · · · Recommended 	<p>Minor Thoroughfares</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ——— Existing - - - - - Needs Improvement · · · · · Recommended <p>Interchanges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Existing Interchange ● Proposed Interchange ◐ Interchange Needs Improvement ○ Existing Grade Separation ◐ Proposed Grade Separation
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Figure 1

Sheet 2 of 5

Base map date:

Refer to CTP document for more details



Highway Map Graham County Comprehensive Transportation Plan

DRAFT

Plan date: 3/23/15

Revision date: 10/7/19