



Technical Memorandum

**Final Recommendations –
Identification of
Improvements,
Strategies,
and Solutions**

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December 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum describes the CORE MPO’s vision for freight transportation policy and infrastructure investments within the Savannah MSA (Bryan, Chatham and Effingham Counties). Based on the results from the previous tasks of the CORE MPO’s Freight Transportation Plan, particularly the identified freight needs and freight impacts on economic development, this report addresses the specific freight projects and policies necessary to keep the Savannah region viable in the freight market during the present time and in the future.

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2. FREIGHT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In conjunction with the freight infrastructure improvement recommendations, the freight policy recommendations will provide guidance in the maintenance and investment of the freight infrastructure and movement of freight and goods in the Savannah MSA. As the Savannah region and the state continue to invest in the Port of Savannah, improving connections to the port on land is crucial in the process of capturing the freight growth anticipated for the region. In order to ensure this efficient movement of freight and goods, any freight project should be recognized and given a higher priority due to its benefits to the economy and the continued investment of technological and innovative improvement in the national, state, and regional freight transportation system. A series of freight policy recommendations are listed below.

- ***Maintain State of Good Repair of the existing freight system***

Freight movements cause a lot of wear and tear, thus it is important to place a high priority on preserving and maintaining the physical conditions of the existing freight network. These improvements include resurfacing of roadways, maintenance of bridges, maintenance of rail tracks, river dredging, etc.

- ***Encourage that safety improvements which accommodate truck traffic are included for projects on the freight transportation network***

Encourage safety practices beyond minimum compliance. Ensure signage and roadway markings on all designated truck routes, practice access management, maintain lane width minimums on truck routes, reduce the amount of at-grade crossings on truck routes, and provide full railroad crossing safety signalizations at all at-grade crossings. Safety, security and resiliency factors need to be considered and built into transportation infrastructure design and investment decisions for all CORE MPO designated truck routes.

- ***Establish a Regional Multimodal Freight Transportation Network:***

- ***Grandfather State Freight Transportation Network – interstate and state highways; and***
- ***Add local freight roadways onto CORE MPO Regional Freight Network – Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, Chatham Parkway, and Airways Avenue.***

Establish a comprehensive regional multimodal freight transportation network with the region's freight facilities on the network. Establish a regional freight network emphasis area where public investments on freight system shall be focused upon for future investments to ensure the efficient movement of freight and goods in the Savannah region.

- ***Establish Truck Operational Hours along Bay Street (Downtown Savannah)***

Bay Street is a major east-west connection corridor in Downtown Savannah and serves vehicular, truck, bicycle and pedestrian traffic heavily. Identify a strategy which improves the safety and operation of Bay Street for all users of this corridor. Develop a task force which

includes public and private partners who travel on Bay Street for their input on creating an environment on Bay Street that is beneficial to all parties. This task force will establish a set of daily operational hours for trucks traveling through Bay Street.

- ***Develop an ITS/Traffic Messaging System for communication with trucks to utilize alternative routes on the freight transportation network***

Establish and support technology development and deployment of integrated corridor management and the integration of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) on the freight transportation network. As more last-mile connections are constructed with the Port of Savannah, provide signage and alternative routes to truck drivers to avoid congested routes.

- ***Develop corridor signal timing on major truck routes – example GDOT Regional Traffic Operations Program (RTOP)***

With limited funds available for adding capacity to roadways through widening projects, maximizing the existing infrastructure by increasing vehicle throughput within the existing corridor is a necessity. The GDOT RTOP invests resources in improving traffic operations on major arterials by improving the signal operations for the corridor. The purpose of the GDOT RTOP is to increase travel throughput by reducing delays along congested corridors through the improvement of signal operations.

Since RTOP focuses on corridors, these sections of roadways typically cross city and county boundaries. GDOT coordinates with the local governments on the signal timing for the corridors. Currently, the RTOP is only utilized for corridors in the Metro Atlanta region, though GDOT is targeting other corridors around the state for the program. More information about the RTOP is available at www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/RTOP.

RTOP candidates for the Savannah MSA would include:

- U.S. 80
- SR 21
- SR 307

- ***Develop a Wayfinding System between Port of Savannah and Interstate Corridors***

Currently in the Savannah region, sporadic signage with directional references to the Port of Savannah and the local truck route is available. As freight industry continues to grow in the region, new infrastructure improvements are being constructed to provide last-mile connections with the port. As investments are made on the freight transportation network to accommodate trucks, it's important to display to truck drivers the routes best utilized for freight movement, instead of trucks attempting to take short cuts through residential areas.

- ***Continue the CORE MPO Freight Advisory Committee (FAC)***

Established during the CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan development, the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) is made up of private and public sector freight and economic development stakeholders and decision makers. At the conclusion of the freight plan

development, the FAC will be evolved into a standing advisory committee of CORE MPO – Economic Development and Freight Advisory Committee (EDFAC). This committee allows the CORE MPO to provide a forum for peer exchange of freight information for the Savannah region. Participant outreach includes informing the EDFAC on the CORE MPO’s freight activities and allows the EDFAC to provide input and recommendations on the direction of the CORE MPO’s freight planning efforts.

It is recommended that the EDFAC continue to meet regularly to share information on freight and economic development related needs and issues that exist within the Savannah Region, and oversee the implementation of recommended policies and projects from this freight transportation plan. As the CORE MPO’s freight program continues to involve, the EDFAC can provide important feedback and direction for future freight developments.

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3. FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Savannah region and the state continue to invest in the Port of Savannah, improving connections to the port on land is crucial in the process of capturing the freight growth anticipated for the region. This chapter outlines the project-level freight infrastructure improvement recommendations, which combined total over \$1.18 billion in infrastructure improvements for the Savannah region. The projects are divided into three tiers for improvements based on their current development status, ease of implementation and feasibility.

3.1 Short – Term Freight Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations (Years 0 – 5)

The proposed short-term projects, totaling \$288,564,703, have been evaluated based upon the analysis during the CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan development (**Table 3-1**). The short-term recommendations include strategies that can be implemented fairly quickly to provide immediate benefits to freight and goods movement in the Savannah region. The identified improvements, strategies, and recommendations are both broad-based freight policies/programs and specific infrastructure, operational, and mobility enhancement projects. Projects classified as Short-Term are anticipated on being constructed or being programmed for construction within the next five years.

The short-range grade crossing improvement projects are programmed primarily to provide active warning devices at crossing locations where they do not currently exist or are lacking updated safety infrastructure.

Some of the short-term infrastructure improvement projects identified during the early stages of the CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan development are either already under construction or have been let for construction (see list below). These projects are no longer included in the proposed short-term project list.

- 1) Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (Deepening)
- 2) CS 602/CS 650/Grange Rd from SR 21 to E of SR 25
- 3) CS651/Crossgate Rd from SR 21 to NS#734150L in Port Wentworth
- 4) SR 21 from SR 30 to I-95; Including Interchange (Diverging Diamond Interchange)
- 5) I-95 at Airways Avenue Interim Improvements
- 6) SR 25 Conn/Bay Street from I-516 to the Bay Street Viaduct (West Bay Street Widening)

Table 3-1: Short-Term Freight Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations

Short-term (0-5 years)					
Project	Highway	Seaport	Airport	Rail	Cost*
CR 787/Islands Expressway at Wilmington River/Bascule Bridge ²	X				\$45,019,917
SR 21 Culvert Replacement at Pipemakers Canal ²	X				\$2,525,000
SR 25 Culvert Replacement at Pipemakers Canal ²	X				\$2,525,000
SR 26 from I-516 to CS 188/Victory Drive (US 80/Ogeechee Rd Widening) ²	X				\$20,823,924
I-516/Lynes Parkway Widening from I-16 to Veterans Parkway ²	X				\$95,746,503
CR 984/Jimmy DeLoach Parkway @ SR 17 – Interchange (New Interchange at US 80) ²	X				\$26,605,432
Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension from US 80 to I-16 ²	X				\$24,571,426
Intersection Operational Improvements - Ogeechee Road (US 17/SR 25) at Chatham Parkway ¹	X				\$375,000
Operations and Safety Enhancements – Dean Forest Road/Bourne Road (SR 307) from Port Authority to I-16 ¹	X				\$700,000
Intersection Safety Beacon – SR 25 N Coastal Highway at Main Mill Entrance (Port Entrance) ¹	X				\$27,500
Safety Improvements – South of SR 25 at Crossgate intersection in Port Wentworth (On-street angled parking on truck route)	X				\$500,000
Safety Improvements – South of SR 25 at Aberfeldy Street intersection in Port Wentworth (On-street angled parking on truck route)	X				\$500,000
Intersection Safety Beacon – SR 17 at SR 30	X				\$27,500
Safety Improvements – North of SR 17 at 2 nd Avenue intersection in Guyton (On-street angled parking on truck route)	X				\$500,000
Wayfinding – US 280 at Strickland in Pembroke – sign to I-16 through residential street (shortcut_ need to add sign no trucks allowed) ¹	X				\$10,000
Wayfinding – US 280 at SR 67 – need truck signage to I-16 ¹	X				\$10,000

Short-term (0-5 years)					
Project	Highway	Seaport	Airport	Rail	Cost*
US 17/Ogeechee Road widening from east of Lynes Parkway to east of the Springfield Canal and the US 17/Ogeechee Road Intersection with Victory Drive ⁵	X				\$38,000,000
Airways Avenue Widening ²	X				\$5,846,375
SR 25/US 17 Bridge Replacement at Savannah River	X				\$11,258,655
SR 25/US 17 Bridge Replacement at Middle River	X				\$13,002,461

¹ List of Recommendations from the CORE MPO Regional Freight Plan

² Projects from the CORE MPO 2040 Total Mobility Plan

³ Draft Recommendation from the Georgia State Rail Plan that is currently being updated

⁴ Recommendations from the Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan, 2010-2050

⁵ GDOT PI

*The project costs are planning-level estimates.

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3.2 Mid – Term Freight Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations (Years 6 – 15)

The proposed mid-term projects, totaling \$165,122,913, have been evaluated based upon the analysis during the CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan development (**Table 3-2**). The Mid-Term Infrastructure improvement recommendations include strategies that may require design and right-of-way acquisition to provide intermediate benefits to freight and goods movement in the Savannah region. The identified improvements, strategies, and recommendations are both broad-based freight policies/programs and specific infrastructure, operational, and mobility enhancement projects.

Table 3-2: Mid-Term Freight Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations

Mid-term (6-15 years)					
Project	Highway	Seaport	Airport	Rail	Cost*
I-516 @ CS/1503/DeRenne Avenue (DeRenne Blvd. Option) ²	X				\$50,322,299
East DeRenne from SR 204 to Harry S Truman Parkway (East DeRenne Avenue Improvements) ²	X				\$11,162,892
SR 21 from CS 346/Mildred Street to SR 204 (West DeRenne Avenue Improvements) ²	X				\$6,064,991
Brampton Road Connector from Foundation Drive to SR 21/SR 25/US 80 ²	X				\$25,175,226
Build additional tracks for storage, double-tracking or re-configuring storage leads at Garden City Terminal ³				X	\$10,000,000
Increase Garden City Terminal Yard capacity, track lengths, or double tracking ³				X	\$10,000,000
Operations and Safety Enhancements – SR 21 Corridor ¹	X				\$3,500,000
Operations and Safety Enhancements - US 80 Corridor ¹	X				\$3,500,000
Intersection Operational Improvements - SR 25 at SR 30 ¹	X				\$375,000
Intersection Operational Improvements - SR25 at Brampton Road ¹	X				\$375,000
Intersection Operational Improvements - SR 25 at SR 21 – Right Turn Lane ¹	X				\$200,000
Intersection Operational Improvements - SR 119 N Laurel Street at SR 119 E Madison Street – Right Turn southwest crosses over into the opposite lane ¹	X				\$200,000
Intersection Operational Improvements - SR 119 at SR 17 – Four way improvements ¹	X				\$750,000
Intersection Operational Improvements – SR 30 at SR 21 – Right hand turn from US 80 eastbound to SR 21 southbound ¹	X				\$200,000

Mid-term (6-15 years)					
Project	Highway	Seaport	Airport	Rail	Cost*
Interchange Operational Improvements – US 80 at I-95– Extend left turn lane across light for turn onto northbound I-95 ¹	X				\$350,000
Intersection Operational Improvements – SR 30 – add right hand turn lane (westbound) across from Dublin Road into Fleet Pride property entrance ¹	X				\$375,000
Intersection Operational Improvements – US 80 at SR 307 – Widen right hand turn from US 80 eastbound to SR 307 southbound ¹	X				\$375,000
Intersection Operational Improvements – US 80 at 8 th Street/Alfred Street – right hand turn from US 80 eastbound to 8 th Street/Alfred Street southbound; right hand turn form 8 th Street/Alfred Street to US 80 eastbound ¹	X				\$375,000
Intersection Operational Improvements – US 80 at West Lathrop Avenue – Right hand turn from US 80 southbound at West Lathrop Avenue ¹	X				\$375,000
Operational Improvements - Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy – add right hand turn lane westbound Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy to Expansion Blvd northbound ¹	X				\$375,000
Operational Improvements - Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy – add right hand turn lane westbound Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy to Logistics Way northbound ¹	X				\$375,000
Operational Improvements - Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy – add right hand turn lane eastbound Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy to Port Logistics Center Crossroads southbound (near SR 21) ¹	X				\$375,000
Operational Improvements - Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy – add right hand turn lane westbound Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy to Port City entrance northbound ¹	X				\$375,000
Airways Avenue Flyover to Gulfstream Road ²	X				\$15,280,653
I-95 at Airways Avenue Diverging Diamond Interchange ²	X				\$14,000,000
Benton Boulevard from Highlands Boulevard to Meinhard Road ²	X				\$8,496,852
Chatham Parkway Improvements from I-16 to US 80	X				\$2,170,000

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⁴ Recommendations from the Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan, 2010-2050

⁵ GDOT PI

*The project costs are planning level estimates.

3.3 Long – Term Freight Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations (Years 16 – 25)

The proposed long-term projects, totaling \$726,434,278, have been evaluated based upon the analysis during the CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan development (**Table 3-3**). The long-term recommendations include strategies that may require design and right-of-way acquisition, additional funding and extensive coordination with community stakeholders to provide long-term benefits to freight and goods movement in the region. The identified improvements, strategies, and recommendations are both broad-based freight policies/programs and specific infrastructure, operational, and mobility enhancement projects.

Table 3-3: Long-Term Freight Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations

Long-term (16-25 years)					
Project	Highway	Seaport	Airport	Rail	Total Project Cost*
I-95 at SR 21/Augusta Rd Interchange Reconstruction ²	X				\$23,394,881
US 80/Victory Drive Improvements/Congestion Mitigation ²	X				\$39,015,752
President Street/Truman Parkway Interchange Bridge and Ramp Reconstruction ²	X				\$108,883,056
I-516/Lynes Parkway Widening from Veterans Parkway to Mildred Street ²	X				\$158,188,915
I-516/Lynes Parkway at I-16 Interchange Reconstruction ²	X				\$47,250,000
I-16 at I-95 Interchange Reconstruction ²	X				\$84,459,499
I-16 at Chatham Parkway – Interchange improvements ¹	X				\$54,250,000
New Roadway - Effingham Parkway – From SR 119/Effingham to SR 30/Chatham ²	X				\$22,992,175
Savannah Port Rail Improvements to upgrade rail infrastructure and build grade separations as necessary ³	X			X	\$30,000,000
I-95 and Airways Avenue Interchange Reconstruction ²	X				\$80,000,000
I-16 Widening – I-95 to I-516 ²	X				\$78,000,000
SR 21 Grade Separation at CSXT Rail Crossing ¹	X			X	\$33,360,000
SR 25 Grade Separation at NS/CSX Rail Crossings ¹	X			X	\$16,440,000
I-16 Interchange Reconstruction @ SR 307 ¹	X				\$25,250,000

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⁵ GDOT PI

*The project costs are planning level estimates.

4. NEXT STEPS

The documentation of freight policy and infrastructure recommendations in the CORE MPO Freight Transportation Plan establishes where public investments shall be focused on the region's freight system. The freight recommendations are representative of the freight system needs in the Savannah MSA and will be coordinated with the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration for inclusion into their respective plans.

This report will feed into Technical Memorandum 8, which will provide the final comprehensive regional freight, goods, and services plan, and discuss how to fund the freight recommendations outlined in this document.

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