

## Increasing capacity on our nation's transportation system will:

- Unlock Gridlock,
- Generate Jobs,
- Deliver Freight,
- Access Energy,
- Connect Communities

## Did you know?

- The amount of freight moved in this country—from milk, toothpaste and toilet paper to sparkplugs, wheat and wind turbines—is expected to double in the next 40 years?
- The Interstate Highway System represents only 4 percent of total miles but carries 70 percent of commercial truck traffic?
- Each of the top ten worst freight-truck bottlenecks cause over one million hours of delay a year?

"The Jimmy DeLoach Connector arguably may be the most important 3.5 miles of highway ever built in Georgia. There will be untold economic and mobility benefits for our state and the entire Southeast once we find a way to make this project a reality."

—Vance Smith Jr., Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner



## Freight Capacity Needs

### Jimmy DeLoach Connector

The Georgia 21 Corridor is located near Savannah between the fast-growing bedroom community of Effingham County on the north side of Interstate 95 and downtown Savannah on the south side of Interstates 16 and 516.

Inbetween, Georgia 21 connects the Port of Savannah (the fourth-largest and fastest-growing container port in the nation), large warehouse and distribution centers, and the Savannah/Hilton Head Airport. The four-lane roadway carries approximately 35,000 vehicles daily and has numerous operational challenges including signalized intersections and many curb cuts along its 7.5-mile length. Already congested with a mix of automobiles as well as light and heavy truck traffic, Georgia 21 mobility will deteriorate appreciably without added capacity.

The Port of Savannah moved more than 2 million containers in Fiscal Year 2009, many off-loaded to trucks. Vehicle counts conducted in Summer 2006 estimated 5,200 to 5,800 trucks entering and exiting the port daily. With the Panama Canal expansion expected to be complete in 2014, a resulting increase in Asian traffic will likely lead to strong growth at the port for many years. Total throughput capacity at the Savannah Garden City Terminal is forecast to increase to 5.07 million TEUs by 2018. The port expansion, along with the expansion of supporting freight facilities, will bring additional distribution traffic and employee traffic to the area. As such, it is imperative that freight-related access to the Interstate Highway System, warehouse/distribution centers, and the port is enhanced while maintaining mobility for employees and commuters.

Several years ago, a "Northwest Tollway" was proposed by the Savannah Metropolitan Planning Organization to roughly parallel Georgia 21 and relieve congestion on the existing highway. The Northwest Tollway was prohibitively expensive, however, and recently removed from the MPO's fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan.

During a statewide truck-only-lane study by the Georgia Department of Transportation, a sub-area study was conducted of the Georgia 21 Corridor that resulted in the identification of the "Jimmy DeLoach Connector" concept. The connector is a scaled-down, 3.5-mile limited-access version of the Northwest Tollway consisting of two lanes in each direction with grade-separated interchanges or overpasses where appropriate. The connector would run from Georgia 307 on the south (approximately one mile west of the Port of Savannah's main gate) to Georgia 21, south of I-95 (where warehouse and distribution centers support freight movements of the port).

## Capacity Needs *continued*

The Georgia Ports Authority is a strong supporter of the project and is assisting in the preliminary engineering and environmental permitting phase; GDOT is taking the lead on right-of-way acquisition and construction. In recognition of the economic importance of this critical “last mile” freight project, the Georgia General Assembly has budgeted \$120 million in state-funded bonds in the department’s Fiscal Year 2011 budget for the connector.



*Heavy truck and auto Traffic on Georgia 307 at Georgia 21 and at-grade railroad crossing*



*Ship at Port of Savannah*