Concrete column pours in the median of I-16 for the new collector-distributor (CD) lanes on I-95 northbound bridge as part of the 16@95 Improvement Projects in Chatham County, September 2021.
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1
SOUTHEAST GEORGIA

At the start of 2021, many, including myself, were starting to wonder if the world would ever get back to the “normal” we knew before the pandemic. As we approached and passed the year mark of living in a world with COVID to now, I realized that over the course of that time the men and women of the Georgia Department of Transportation have risen to the challenge, proved resiliency is the key to success and forged the way for our state to continue to be one of the best in the nation. As we kick off a new year and a new legislative session, I am pleased to present the annual Georgia DOT update for Congressional District (CD) 1. I hope you’ll find it to be a useful resource that showcases Georgia DOT’s performance in 2021 and how the department has remained vigilant in adapting to meet the needs of communities across the state. In this recap you’ll read about:

- How the department is working to improve freight movement and logistics and from the Port of Savannah and to support its growth
- Key updates to the I-16 at I-95 interchange project currently under construction near Savannah
- The changes made to the Georgia State Rail Plan
- How connected vehicle technology was implemented on Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, State Route 307 and State Route 21 to increase efficiencies of truck mobility
- The launch of the Let’s Ride rural transit website and mobile app
- How key enhancements to the Georgia 511 system, app and website improve efficiency and safety for motorists
- Updates on local widening, resurfacing and interchange projects

Georgia DOT is committed to ongoing investment in Georgia’s infrastructure. In Fiscal Year 2021, GDOT invested in hundreds of statewide projects including:

- 358 projects awarded to contract for construction, valued at $1.84 billion
- 481 active construction projects valued at $4.25 billion
- $295 million awarded for 130 maintenance projects
- 8 interstate maintenance projects valued at $103 million

As we continue on the road to normalcy, Georgia DOT remains steadfast in its efforts to boost the competitiveness of the state by improving freight mobility, enhancing quality of life for our constituents and focusing on moving Georgia forward. As you know, GDOT is governed by a 14-member State Transportation Board that exercises general control and supervision of the department. I appreciate the support of the public and the elected officials who represent CD 1.

As always, your feedback is welcome; my door and phone lines are always open should you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding a Georgia DOT project.

Yours in service,

Ann R. Purcell
Congressional District 1
(912) 663-8128
State Transportation Board of Georgia

NEW I-95 INTERCHANGE AT BELFAST KELLER ROAD

It’s a very rare occurrence for a new interchange to be built on an interstate yet GDOT’s District Five received federal approval to do just that. On January 21, 2021, the newly constructed interchange on Interstate 95 at Belfast Keller Road in southern Bryan County opened to traffic. The new interchange is the third interchange to open in Georgia designed with large roundabouts at the ramp terminals, enhancing safety and accommodating increasing traffic associated with residential and economic growth.

The project represents a total investment of $19.5 million. The local public-private partners helped to advance the project with $7 million in local funds and acquired right-of-way donation. This major infrastructure project is the on-ramp to growth for southern Bryan County and was praised by Governor Brian Kemp and other state and local officials during a roundtable event held in February 2021.

TROY D. PITTMAN, P.E. NAMED DISTRICT ENGINEER FOR SOUTHEAST GEORGIA

Troy D. Pittman, P.E., was promoted to district engineer of GDOT’s District Five effective December 1, providing executive oversight for the ongoing programmatic operations and activities on interstates and state routes in the district. Troy brings a vast range of knowledge and leadership skills and has a diverse background in design, preconstruction and construction enabling him to successfully lead the delivery of transportation projects for citizens, businesses and visitors of southeast Georgia.

Troy is a Major with the 165th Airlift Wing Georgia Air National Guard in Garden City where he serves as a Bioenvironmental Engineer. He’s served in various roles from Civil Engineering Officer, Base Civil Engineer and Acting Commander for the Civil Engineering Squadron. He succeeds Robert McCall, who recently retired after 32 years of service. Congratulations Troy!
Spalding, Butts, Lamar and Monroe. The CVL project seeks to lanes will be non-tolled and will span across five counties: Henry, approximately 41 miles from the I-475/I-75 Interchange near the Port of Savannah. Currently under construction near Savannah, these projects will:

- Widen the I-16 mainline corridor from two to three lanes in each direction from I-95 to I-516 to relieve congestion
- Reconstruct the I-169/I-95 interchange to increase operational efficiency and safety
- Replace the existing I-95 southbound to I-16 eastbound and the I-16 westbound to I-95 southbound loop ramps with partial turbine configuration ramps – Georgia’s first utilization of the configuration – to provide smoother, more direct connections

As the project progresses and sections are complete, GDOT will open newly constructed, improved infrastructure, which will provide benefits to motorists prior to substantial completion date of late 2023. The 16895 Improvement Projects will allow greater capacity, including increased freight traffic with the deepening of Port of Savannah.

I-75 COMMERCIAL VEHICLE LANES

The I-75 Commercial Vehicle Lanes (CVL) project – the first of its kind in the nation – will construct two, barrier-separated commercial vehicle-only lanes northbound along I-75 for corridor by providing additional capacity for commercial traffic. This segment of roadway is the second most significant freight corridor in Georgia as it receives freight coming from Florida and the Port of Savannah. Currently, the CVL project is in the environmental process with Public Hearing Open Houses anticipated in 2022.

MAJOR MOBILITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM PROJECTS

In 2016, Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP) transportation projects were identified to create additional capacity, improve freight movement, provide operational improvements and efficiencies, enhance safety, offer more reliable trip times and decrease travel times across Georgia. They include interchange, express lanes, interstate widening and bridge improvement projects, plus a commercial vehicle lanes project. The MMIP is an ambitious program and the first of its kind in the country, and the projects under the MMIP are quickly advancing.

16895 IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

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LOCAL PROJECT UPDATES

Jimmy Deloach Parkway Extension Project adds Interchange Roundabouts

The $44.9 million Jimmy Deloach Parkway Extension project (JDP) is under construction on more than 3.8 miles from US 80 to I-16. The project extension will create a mainline to improve regional connectivity by providing an alternate direct route from I-16 to the Georgia Ports Authority area and to I-95 north of Savannah. The project extension will include construction of interchange roundabouts at the ramps on each side of the SR 17 bridge over I-16 (Exit 152). These interchange roundabouts will provide wide travel and turn lanes, large concrete truck aprons and interchange lighting. This element is needed to better accommodate the anticipated influx of commercial and vehicular traffic upon the project’s completion.

Resurfacing US 31 in Wayne County

The $15 million resurfacing and shoulder rehabilitation project will resurface 28 miles on US 31 beginning at the Glynn County line to East Railroad Street in the City of Odum in Wayne County. This maintenance project is essential to maintain US 31 as a main corridor throughout southeast Georgia and is expected to be complete in the third quarter of 2022.

Big Creek Bridge replacement on US 82 in Brantley County

The US 82 westbound bridge at Bull Creek, approximately four miles west of Hoboken, is scheduled for replacement and will close the first quarter of 2022. The $3.9 million project will replace the current 60-year-old weight restricted bridge. US 82 is a major freight corridor therefore the existing eastbound bridge will be used as a detour route with a single lane in each direction. The project is expected to be completed in second quarter of 2023.

Paxton Road at Hatchers Branch Bridge in Charlton County Replaced

Paxton Road at Hatchers Branch bridge in Charlton County, one mile west of Folkston, reopened to traffic after it closed in August for replacement. The $1.1 million GDOT let project replaced the Charlton County owned weight restricted bridge to meet current safety standards. Georgia DOT’s Low Impact Bridge Program and Local Bridge Replacement Program helps local governments replace deficient bridges.

Camp Creek Bridge Replacement on SR 169 in Clinch County

This $1.69 million Camp Creek bridge replacement project on US 221/SR 169, 15 miles northeast of Homerville in Clinch County, opened to traffic in December 2021. The old bridge, which was built in 1958 and posted for weight restrictions, was dismantled allowing the new bridge to be built in its place. By working within existing right of way and not changing the alignment of the bridge, construction was able to be completed twice as fast and with cost savings. This bridge was open to traffic on schedule and on budget which underscores the commitment Georgia DOT has to the community.

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In 2021, an update to the Georgia State Rail Plan was prepared and is awaiting Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approval of the final draft. The update contains information about 158 proposed short-range and long-range projects that would total $2.275 billion. The various projects within the Rail Service and Investment Program would work to increase rail’s modal share, modernize short line railroad infrastructure, extend the reach of the Port of Savannah through inland ports, alleviate blocked crossings and promote passenger rail project opportunities.

Georgia’s rail system has strong economic impact not only on the state, but on the region and the United States as a whole. Rankings by the American Railroad Association show that Georgia has improved from No. 13 to No. 8 in the nation regarding the number of freight railroads and from No. 7 to No. 5 in originating rail carloads. One in every seven workers in Georgia has a job directly affected by the railroad industry, and Georgia generates $160.8 billion dollars of economic output from both passenger and freight rail activity annually.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, nearly 25 million truck trips occur on Georgia’s Interstate and State Route highways every day, with 73 percent of this traffic traveling on a State Designated Freight Corridor. In 2020, the Port of Savannah was named the No. 1 U.S. port for total export volume, as well as the No. 1 U.S. port specifically for agricultural exports. The port continues to develop and prepare for a bright future. Its Mason Mega Rail project, when fully implemented in 2022, will double the Port of Savannah’s rail capacity, enabling the on-site assemblage of 10,000-foot unit trains, and reduce rail transit times by 24 hours between the port and major inland markets such as Chicago, Cincinnati, Memphis and St. Louis.

The vital importance of freight movement in Georgia was the foundation of the Georgia DOT Freight & Logistics Plan, which was last updated in early 2018. Since then, the state has experienced continued growth in population, manufacturing, agriculture and distribution, therefore a comprehensive update to the plan is vital to maintain the state’s economic success and will be completed by early 2023.

This business-focused plan will be a comprehensive, strategic assessment of current and future demand on the state’s freight infrastructure assets, and will investigate options for state infrastructure investments, operational efficiencies and policy scenario considerations that support companies doing business in the state, while enhancing the safe, efficient and reliable movement of goods.
The future of transportation in Georgia is upon us. We are beginning to see self-driving cars on our roadways and technology infrastructure that can support future innovations in automobile safety. GDOT has been underway with a program to support connected vehicles for nearly five years. Back in 2017, GDOT responded to a challenge from the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials to deploy dedicated short range communication infrastructure with signal phase and timing (SPaT) broadcasts in at least one corridor for the purpose of supporting vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure traffic applications. GDOT implemented the first pilot program along State Route 9 in Atlanta in 2018 and has continued to win grants to expand efforts in connected vehicle technology implementation across the state.

Earlier this year, the department implemented the Georgia Ports Authority pilot program along the major ingress and egress routes from the ports in Savannah including Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, State Route 307 and State Route 21. This pilot program is looking at how Georgia can improve freight mobility by implementing freight signal priority with participating freight providers. Each of the participating freight providers are installing the radio technology in their fleet vehicles and intersections along the identified corridors have already been outfitted with the technology. The intersections began broadcasting information from the infrastructure directly to the trucks running the route to grant priority to the traffic signal, and it will influence the signal to give a green light. This increases the efficiency and safety of the system.

Let’s Ride App

In July, GDOT launched the Let’s Ride rural transit website and mobile app, bringing rural Georgians a simplified and streamlined way to plan and book their travel with participating rural transit providers by allowing riders to set their pick-up and drop-off locations and schedule rides. In 2019, rural transit provided more than 1.5 million rides to Georgians, and with the Let’s Ride website and app, GDOT is looking to collaborate with more regional partners and increase awareness and ridership of rural transit services. In Georgia’s rural areas, public transit is provided as demand response service operated by local public agencies or third-party-operators. It is a transportation service open to any person located in a rural service area.
SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING FEASIBILITY STUDY

This planning and feasibility study, currently being undertaken by Georgia DOT in partnership with the Georgia Ports Authority, aims to identify improvement alternatives for the existing Talmadge Memorial Bridge (US 17) over the Savannah River. Although structurally sound, the bridge’s clearance limits an ever-larger generation of ships from navigating beneath the bridge to access the Port of Savannah’s terminals located upriver from the bridge.

As the fastest growing port in the nation, the Port of Savannah is a significant economic engine for the region. The Talmadge Memorial Bridge carries US 17 across the Savannah River, and it also serves as a gateway for ships calling on the Port of Savannah’s terminals, located upriver from the bridge.

The study includes transportation planning, pre-engineering, and engineering development and the environmental document. No project has been determined to date and there is no identified funding.

SR 307 AND I-16 DIVERGING DIAMOND INTERCHANGE

Construction is underway on the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) at the intersection of SR 307 (Dean Forest Road) and I-16. The new DDI, which once complete will provide operational improvements while enhancing safety, serves several industrial and intermodal sites, and SR 307 serves as the primary entrance to the Garden City Terminal. The proposed improvements will replace the existing bridge with a split bridge design (two bridges, each with three lanes) east of the existing SR 307 bridge, adjust ramp lengths and widen lanes to accommodate commercial vehicle traffic, replace existing signals and interchange lighting and add pedestrian facilities. The SR 307 @ I-16 Diverging Diamond Interchange project is anticipated to open to traffic in late 2022.

GEORGIA 511 INTRODUCES KEY ENHANCEMENTS

First launched by GDOT in 2007, Georgia 511 provides the latest traffic and travel information 24 hours a day, seven days a week across Georgia’s state routes and interstates, including travel speeds, traffic incidents, construction events, lane closures and severe, and in September the system got a big upgrade.

Key updates to the Georgia 511 website include:

- Step-by-step navigation, which enables users to receive up to three route options with travel times and turn-by-turn navigation to their desired destination;
- The ability to save individual traffic cameras for a real-time view of road conditions; and
- Customized route preferences to allow users to save their favorite routes and receive alerts on traffic and construction incidents.

The upgrades to the Georgia 511 system, designed to improve functionality and navigation for users, aim to make our roads safer and less congested while also improving how motorists across the state make it to their destinations.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

The nation’s infrastructure plays a critical role in the public’s safety and is directly connected to the economy. Georgia DOT is currently assessing the $1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in the area transportation.

There are four general areas in the IIJA that Georgia DOT is reviewing and preparing for delivery including:

- Existing transportation programs with increased funding levels
- New formula funding programs for carbon reduction and resiliency
- New discretionary programs administered by the U.S. DOT
- Policy/studies for things like environmental streamlining and national mileage-based user fee study

Two new programs of specific interest are in electric vehicle charging and addressing the nations bridges. It is anticipated that through the various formula funds guaranteed to Georgia DOT, the department can anticipate a 20-23 percent increase in funding, including a 30 percent or greater increase over current funding levels for transit programs. Use of federal funds requires a state funded match and federal funding is a reimbursable program.

GEORGIA 511 INTRODUCES KEY ENHANCEMENTS

Scan to learn more about the newly enhanced Georgia 511

Scan to view the study website
Keep the roads clear. We don’t litter here.