2024 GEORGIA DOT UPDATE

Congressional District 1 Southeast Georgia Region

ANN R. PURCELL
STATE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

SR 520/US 82 westbound bridge replacement



2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW



2024 saw several hurricanes that ravaged Georgia and the Southeast as a whole with pounding rain, damaging winds, fallen trees and flash flooding. It's heartbreaking to acknowledge the enormous loss faced by our fellow Georgians. Lives were tragically cut short and homes, along with businesses, were reduced to ruins. As a native of Tattnall county and having lived in Coastal Georgia for the past 30+ years, I understand the continuous threat that hurricanes represent each year. All of us know this unfortunate reality of life in this beautiful part of our state.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) prepares year-round for all types of weather events to ensure our crews have the tools and supplies at the ready when emergency response is needed. For Congressional District (CD 1) that severe weather threat often takes the form of a hurricane and Georgia DOT has standardized measures in place with a single, heartfelt aim - to ensure the safety of Georgians.

When a hurricane is forecasted to impact Georgia, Georgia DOT begins coordination efforts with local, state and federal partners to strategize a response plan seven to 10 days ahead of the predicted storm. Approximately five days before a hurricane makes landfall, Georgia DOT mobilizes hundreds of employees while readying equipment. The department and its staff begin 24/7 emergency operations three days out from the storm and begin interstate contraflow operations two days before the storm hits all in an effort to keep Georgians safe during evacuations.

I must express my deep appreciation to the department's employees who worked tirelessly to minimize the impact of hurricanes in 2024. I ask that as you read this Georgia DOT update for CD 1, to hold in your thoughts the resilient citizens of Georgia, our diligent department's employees, and the numerous individuals across the Southeast who have faced life-altering changes due to hurricanes in 2024.

Georgia DOT is committed to ongoing investment in Georgia's infrastructure. In FY 2024, GDOT transportation investments included:

- 255 projects awarded to contract for construction, valued at \$2.6 billion
- 621 active contracts with a budget of approximately \$5.3 billion
- 192 routine maintenance projects valued at approximately \$88 million
- 130 projects open to traffic, valued at \$502 million

For a more detailed and transparent look at GDOT's funding, performance measures, operations, projects and initiatives for FY 2024, please use the QR code below to access the department's FY 2024 Accountability and Investment Report.

It is my great honor to be your representative on the State Transportation Board of Georgia. My door is always open, so please feel free to reach out if you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding transportation in Georgia or an upcoming/ongoing project in CD 1.

Yours in service,

Ann P. Purcell

Ann R. Purcell, Chair

State Transportation Board of Georgia (912) 663-8128



STATE TRANSPORTATION BOARD ELECTS NEW EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

In August, I was honored to accept the position of Chair of the State Transportation Board of Georgia. Congressional District (CD) 10 representative Jamie Boswell was elected vice chair and CD 3 representative Dennis McEntire was elected secretary. Board elections are held annually to ensure all regions of the state are represented at the executive leadership level. The 14-member State Transportation Board is responsible for setting policies and governing the Georgia Department of Transportation. Board members are elected by a caucus of Georgia General Assembly members from their respective congressional districts and serve staggered, fiveyear terms.

Serving as your CD 1 representative for over a decade has been a true privilege. As chair, my commitment is to support Georgia's growing economy and advocate for a safe, efficient transportation infrastructure. I'm keenly aware that many businesses and households rely on our transportation network daily, and I'm dedicated to ensuring it works for all.



Left to right: Dennis McEntire (CD 3), Ann Purcell (CD 1), Jamie Boswell (CD 10), and GDOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurry. P.E.

UNITED WAY OF THE COASTAL EMPIRE "WOMEN WHO RULE" EVENT

In the Spring of 2024, I was honored to participate in a very special event in support of women in CD 1. The United Way of the Coastal Empire held its annual "Women Who Rule" event to raise money for the Women United Transportation Fund which supports women in need of help in the Coastal Empire region. The fund helps with reliable transportation to get to work, school, medical appointments and more by providing bus passes, gas cards and even money for minor vehicle repairs.

I was part of a three-person panel that discussed the topic of "Reliable Rides – the importance of dependable transportation" and answered transportation-related questions.

In total, the event raised a record-breaking \$27,500. The Women Who Rule campaign has been in existence for 13 years and is clearly having a tangible impact on the lives of so many.

Congratulations to the United Way of the Coastal Empire for sponsoring such a wonderful and worthwhile cause and it was an honor to be part of this great event that helps so many of our neighbors in CD 1.





US 17/SR 404 SPUR AT SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING PROJECT

The US 17/SR 404 Spur at Savannah River Crossing Project will examine future, long-term improvement alternatives for the existing Talmadge Bridge. As the fastest growing port in the nation, the Port of Savannah is a significant economic engine for the Savannah region, the state of Georgia, and the nation. Potentially stifling future growth, however, is the Port's accessibility to larger ships due to the vertical clearance of the current bridge. These larger ships, which are becoming increasingly common on the world's oceans, are limited by the existing 185-foot clearance of US 17 bridge which ships must pass beneath when arriving and departing the port.

In 2022, Georgia DOT, aware of the capacity limitations of the port, began the Savannah River Crossing Feasibility Study which examined more than two dozen improvement alternatives to the existing bridge. From that study, two options were considered viable:



 The first proposed alternative would be to build a new bridge, adjacent to the current bridge, that would add up to 45 feet of clearance, making the new US 17 bridge one of the tallest in the world at 230 feet at an estimated cost of \$1.17 billion.



Scan to learn more about US 17/SR 404 SPUR Project

• The second alternative would build a tunnel west of the existing bridge underneath the river and would be constructed as two parallel tube-like passages. These passages would be approximately 50 feet in diameter and constructed 50 feet apart at an estimated cost of \$2.01 billion with comparable traffic capacity to the bridge option.

On May 20, 2024, Georgia DOT hosted the first Public Information Open House (PIOH) open comment period for the two alternatives and provided the public an opportunity to review the project background and potential solutions as well as submit feedback. The project team reviewed all comments, questions, and suggestions that were submitted and prepared responses in the form of a PIOH Comment Response Letter posted on the projects website.

Stakeholder and public feedback remain an essential component to the concept development process. The public will have another opportunity to comment on the project in a second PIOH tentatively scheduled for March 2025. To stay up to date, visit the project website by scanning the QR Code above.

I-16 BRIDGE STRUCK AT CHATHAM PARKWAY

On July 11, the I-16 interchange Chatham Parkway Bridge had to be temporarily closed because it was struck by a truck transporting an excavator. The department immediately closed Chatham Parkway near the overpass bridge as well as I-16 westbound as we evaluated the site. Only two days later on July 13, all I-16 interstate lanes near the Chatham Parkway overpass were re-opened as well as one lane in each direction on Chatham Parkway above the interstate.

Based on GDOT's assessment, four beams and portions of the bridge deck will need to be replaced. Chatham Parkway is currently in a temporary configuration to ensure traffic flow while Georgia DOT expedites a corrective plan to restore the bridge to its full functionality. An overall timeline and the full scope of the anticipated construction are expected in early 2025.

Obviously, this is not something we wanted to happen, but the department's emergency crews were ready when called upon and we were able get traffic moving again safely.

US 17 WIDENING AND ROUNDABOUT PROJECTS (3 ADJOINING PROJECTS) IN GLYNN COUNTY

Three connected projects on US 17 in Glynn County will significantly expand and enhance the transportation network in the coastal region of Georgia, reducing travel times and relieving the stress of daily commutes.

The first is expanding the road from two lanes to four from the existing four lane section at Yacht Road to Harry Driggers Boulevard; the next is widening the road to four lanes from Harry Driggers Boulevard to GA 99; and the final piece is a roundabout at the T-intersection of U.S. 17 and GA 99.

Construction is currently underway on both widening projects, which have a combined budget of \$61.2 million. Phase 1, from Yacht Road to Harry Driggers Boulevard, is progressing well and is expected to open to traffic in 2025. Phase 2, from Harry Driggers Boulevard to SR 99, is also on track and is projected to open to traffic in 2026. The total length of these projects is approximately 6.4 miles. The \$5.7 million roundabout project at SR 99, located at the north end of the widening projects is on schedule.

US 280, I-16 FRONTAGE, & OLD CUYLER ROAD INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN BRYAN COUNTY



The Bryan County Mega-Site is the largest, single economic development investment project in Georgia history. It is strategically located adjacent to I-16 with immediate access from I-95 and I-16 to 250 major metro areas, including Atlanta, Birmingham, Charlotte, Memphis, and Orlando. The site is also less than 30 miles from the Port of Savannah. As the future home of the Hyundai Motor Company's first electric vehicle manufacturing facility in the United States, the Bryan County Mega-Site is anticipated to bring approximately 8,100 jobs and generate over 25,000 daily vehicle trips in the area.

Essentially, US 280, I-16 Frontage, and Old Cuyler Road Interchange improvement projects will provide more efficient access to the Mega-Site. The interchange improvement projects include:

- Construction of a new Frontage Road along I-16 was completed in October 2024. It has since been renamed Genesis Drive, and will provide access to the Hyundai facility.
- Widening US 280, including two roundabouts at the I-16 ramps, one roundabout at Oracal Parkway, a roundabout at Dillon Drive and a roundabout at the new I-16 Frontage Road. Substantial completion for this project is anticipated for Q4 2025.
- Construction of a new interchange at I-16 and Old Cuyler Road is anticipated to start construction in Q3 2025. In addition to the new interchange, three multilane roundabouts will be constructed. Substantial completion is anticipated for 2027.

The US 280, I-16 Frontage, and Old Cuyler Road Interchange Improvement Project are Georgia DOT specific and are separate endeavors from the Bryan County Mega-Site development. They are intended to improve surrounding infrastructure for all users, including the local communities it serves.

US 84 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT OVER SATILLA RIVER & OVERFLOW IN WARE AND PIERCE COUNTIES

On May 1, 2024, work began to replace the US 84 bridges over the Satilla River and Satilla overflow at the Ware/Pierce County line near the City of Waycross. The bridges were originally built in 1923 and were overhauled and widened in 1982 when US Highway 84 was widened to four lanes.

US 84 will remain open to traffic as the bridge construction has been staged on the existing alignment in two stages. One lane in each direction will be maintained for the project's duration. This \$44.8 million project is slated for completion in 2027.

THE I-16/I-75 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN BIBB COUNTY

Originally built in the early 1960s, the I-16/I-75 interchange was designed to serve the then-small population of Macon. Over the last few decades, the city's population has quadrupled, and a redesign and reconstruction of the I-16/I-75 interchange was needed to meet the growing demand of local commuters, businesses and regional travelers. The improvement project is not only a \$500 million investment in Macon-Bibb and the Middle Georgia region, but also an investment in Georgia's overall transportation system and the exponential growth of commercial freight from Georgia's southern coast ports.

The I-16/I-75 Interchange Improvement Project will enhance the safety and mobility of the interchange by widening and reconstructing I-75 from Hardeman Avenue to Pierce Avenue and I-16 from I-75 to Walnut Creek within Macon-Bibb. Due to its complexity, the I-16/I-75 Improvement projects consists of several phases:

- Phase 1a consisted of improvements to I-16 eastbound between I-75 and Coliseum Drive. This phase was completed earlier in 2023.
 - B. Phase 1b was completed the Fall of 2018 and other anticipated mitigation improvements are to be completed by Fall of 2025.
- Phase 2 consists of operational improvements along I-75 NB from Hardeman Ave to the southern limit of I-16 interchange. This anticipated completion is Spring 2025.
- Phase 3 consists of capacity and operational improvements to construction of the I-75 northbound within the interchange. The anticipated completion date is Spring 2025.
- Phase 4 consists of capacity and operational improvements to" almost 3 miles of I-16 eastbound from I-75 to Walnut Creek. The anticipated completion date is Spring 2026.
- Phase 5 consists of capacity and operational improvements to I-16 Westbound and I-75. The anticipated completion date is Spring 2026.
- The last Phase is currently under design/ preconstruction, tentatively scheduled for bid in fiscal year 2026.

16@95 IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN CHATHAM COUNTY

The I-16/I-95 Improvement Projects, which are part of the Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP), is reconstructing and providing infrastructure enhancements to the I-16 at I-95 Interchange and widening the I-16 corridor from I-95 to I-516. The projects are intended to ease congestion, decrease travel times, and increase safety and operational efficiencies for passenger and freight vehicles.

The department opened to traffic two new turbine bridge ramps. The first carries traffic from I-16 westbound to I-95 southbound and replaced a cloverleaf loop ramp to help provide smoother, more direct connections for travelers connecting from one interstate to the next. And, the second bridge carries traffic from the I-95 southbound to I-16 eastbound bridge ramp which combined exits for eastbound and westbound motorists.

In 2024, the I-16/I-95 Improvement Projects continued construction of the widening of I-16 as well as construction of

the I-95 overpass bridge over I-16. Bridge construction continues within I-16/I-516 interchange on the bridges over Bunger Pit Road and CSX.

When completed these 16@95 improvement projects will support the 100,000 projected daily vehicles in metro Savannah by 2030, alleviating more than 30 percent of delays on I-16 between I-516 and I-95.





View Website US 17/SR 404 SPUR BRIDGE MAJOR MAINTENANCE PROJECT

Commonly known as the Talmadge Bridge, the US 17/SR 404 Spur Bridge is one of the most recognized landmarks in the Savannah area. In January 2023, my colleagues and I on the State Transportation Board of Georgia voted to improve the existing bridge structure by replacing the cables, bridge bearings and joints by approving the US 17/SR 404 Spur Bridge Major Maintenance Project. The project took a major step forward this year with the installation of the new median glare screen, which will enhance the safety of the bridge.

Additionally, the department is also exploring shortening the cables to reprofile the bridge and give it a higher vertical clearance to address the Port of Savannah's accessibility to larger ships.

Further maintenance is anticipated in 2025.

Scan to learn more on major maintenance peojects.

SR 307/DEAN FOREST ROAD DDI

In January 2024, the Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI) on SR 307 @ Interstate 16 was finalized and opened to traffic. Focused on increasing operational efficiency, and with increased heavy commercial vehicle traffic to and from Georgia's ports in recent years, Georgia DOT converted the interchange at on State Route 307/Dean Forest Road at Interstate 16 to a DDI.

A DDI crosses traffic to the opposite side of the road allowing vehicles to have unimpeded movement on and off interstate ramps. They are best suited for intersections with heavy left turning volume on and off interstate ramps, or locations that need additional capacity as is the case with the SR 307 at I-16. Research has shown that a DDI replacing a conventional interchange significantly decreases crash frequency.

The DDI on SR 307 at Interstate 16 is a state-of-the-art solution designed to improve traffic flow and reduce accidents. It stands as a symbol of GDOT's commitment to adopting cutting-edge approaches to transportation challenges.



HOULIHAN AND MIDDLE RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENTS

Under construction since late 2022, the SR 25 Bridge Replacements at the Savannah and Middle Rivers in Port Wentworth are replacing the two, long-standing historical bridges that carry traffic into South Carolina.

- Built in 1922, the Houlihan Bridge was one of the oldest bridges in the state of Georgia and one of the only bridges in Chatham County to be rated in "poor condition" by the Federal Highway Administration. The last working turnstile or swing bridge in Georgia, the Houlihan Bridge allowed motorists to take Georgia 25 over the Savannah River and Middle River and into South Carolina. Georgia DOT secured \$65.5 million in state and federal funding and enacted a plan to demolish and replace the bridge. The new Houlihan Bridge opened to traffic on Monday, July, 22, 2024. Demolition of the old bridge is expected to be completed in the fall of 2025.
- Construction continues on the Middle River bridge with work on the substructure now complete and crews placing concrete on the bridge deck through the end of 2024. The project is anticipated to reach substantial completion in 2025.



Scan to learn more about bridge replacements.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT GA ITE 2024 SUMMER SEMINAR

This summer I was honored to provide the opening remarks to the Georgia section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (GA ITE) at their summer seminar on St. Simons Island. ITE is an international professional society with members in 80 countries with almost 15,000 transportation engineers, planners and other individuals responsible for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

In my remarks, I focused on the role of the State Transportation Board, Georgia DOT's focus on safety which drives everything we do at the department and some important projects in CD 1 that I believe are innovative and are examples of how Georgia DOT is advancing transportation engineering in Georgia, many of which I highlighted in this publication.

Many of the department's employees are members of GA ITE and it was an honor to speak to so many individuals who are vital to Georgia's transportation network. Engineers help shape a safer, more efficient, and sustainable future for Georgia's transportation network, and it was an honor to thank them in person for all that they do for the state of Georgia.





GEORGIA'S TRANSPORTATION NETWORK EARNS TOP MARKS IN ASCE 2024 INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD

In July, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) issued their 2024 Infrastructure Report Card for the state of Georgia. ASCE is the country's oldest national engineering organization representing 160,000 civil engineers in private practice, government, industry, and academia who are dedicated to advancing the science and profession of civil engineering. And every 5 years, the organization issues infrastructure report cards evaluating how a state's infrastructure systems are working. In 2024, the state of Georgia earned an overall grade of C+ which is higher than the national average of C-. Essentially, Georgia's infrastructure is considered to be above average. Fourteen infrastructure categories were considered, and the state's transportation system was a significant contributor for the above average score. Highlights from the report include:



- Georgia improving from a C+ to B in the bridges category.
 - o In 2022, 98 percent of Georgia's bridges were rated to be in fair or good condition – better than 93 percent in 2017 and much improved from 78 percent in 2013.
- In the roads category, the state received a C+, up from the national grade of D. That C+ grade is the highest in the country in the roads category, tied with Utah.
- 67 percent of Georgia's interstate roads are in good condition – seven percentage points higher than in 2019. And the state is ranked 6th-best state for road conditions.

Everyone at the department is proud of the improvement's made to the state's transportation infrastructure in recent years. Having said that, we are keenly aware that the work is not finished. With Georgia's population on the rise, we are committed to delivering a transportation network that is safe, efficient and works for all of Georgia.

GEORGIA DOT RECEIVES \$1.5B INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Based on Governor Brian P. Kemp's amended Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 2024) budget recommendation, which was approved by the Georgia General Assembly, Georgia DOT received \$1.5 billion investment for transportation programs and projects. As a result, the department is able to advance various phases of 10 projects in CD 1. The projects include eight freight mobility projects and two capital construction projects. The total investment of the additional funds in CD 1 is \$347 million. Below is a list of the 10 projects advanced including the type of project, the phases advanced and the amount of funding provided.

- SR 17 to SR 30 Connector (Chatham County) Roadway project - Preliminary engineering and right-of-way phases - \$13.7 million
- SR 307 @ US 80 Intersection Upgrade (Chatham County) Grade separation - Preliminary engineering phase - \$5 million
- SR 307 @ SR 21/Augusta Rd Rail Crossing Separation (Chatham County) Grade separation - Preliminary engineering phase - \$5 million
- SR 21 Widening (Chatham, Effingham counties) Widening project - Preliminary engineering and right-of-way phases - \$13 million
- I-16 Widening Construction Phase I (Chatham, Effingham counties) Widening project - Construction, utilities and right-of-way - \$233 million
- I-16 Widening (Design) (Chatham, Effingham, Bryan, Bulloch counties) Widening project - Preliminary engineering phase - \$41 million
- I-16 Corridor Future Capacity and Operational Analysis (Chatham, Effingham, Bryan, Bulloch counties) Study - Preliminary engineering phase - \$5 million
- SR 32/SR 99 Corridor Upgrades @ I-95 (Glynn County) Widening project - Preliminary engineering phase - \$1.8 million
- SR 38/Hinesville Bypass (Liberty County) Roadway project Construction phase - \$27.7 million
- Rail Crossing Upgrades in Waycross (Ware County) Study - Preliminary engineering/scoping phase - \$2 million



Thank you to Gov. Brian Kemp, Lt. Gov. Burt Jones, House of Representatives Speaker Jon Burns and the members of the Georgia General Assembly for their continued investment in coastal Georgia's transportation infrastructure. It truly shows Georgia's commitment to our citizens and the economic growth that will be realized in the years to come.

GEORGIA DOT'S INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Every year, Georgia DOT offers a select group enterprising young people the opportunity to complement their academic curriculum with innovative job experiences. The department's internship program allows students to expand and strengthen their backgrounds by building professional relationships and learning new skills in various work functions.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to meet many of the interns who worked out of the GDOT District 5 office in Jesup. These interns were immersed in various projects, guided by seasoned professionals, and given the opportunity to apply their classroom knowledge to real-world challenges. Under the guidance of an assigned mentor, the interns were able to gain valuable hands-on experience in a culturally diverse, innovative and multi-specialty work environment. I was truly Nickayla Myers, Jacob Hernandez, Deven Kelley, Lakell impressed by how each student was able to bring their unique skills, educational backgrounds, and aspirations to the table.

Many of the department's employees, especially engineers, started as interns and found a love for civil service through this internship program. It is a valuable tool to highlight how the department serves the people of Georgia, and I was honored to speak to this next generation who will help shape the state of Georgia.



Left to right (kneeling):Nathan De Jesus, Kenneth Czech, McKinsey; Left to right (standing): Marcus Jermon, Kamron Brown, Fernando Andrade, Abraham Valencia, Jason Kirkendohl; Left to right (Sitting On wall): John Strickland, Jacqueline Smerz, Isaac Ayala

Georgia Department of Transportation

ARRIVE LIVE

SAFETY EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Georgia DOT is committed to achieving zero fatalities on our roadways. The loss of even one life on our roadways is unacceptable. The more than 4000 GDOT employees work diligently to deliver a safe, resilient transportation network that supports the state's future growth. As part of that commitment, we often promote safety with our construction projects, but another large component of our safety strategy is education. The department's many roadway safety educational programs include:



DRIVE ALERT ARRIVE ALIVE

Tragically, 1,664 people died on Georgia's roads in 2023. Drive Alert Arrive Alive is Georgia DOT's safety intiative to educate drivers about the simple changes they can make in their driving behavior to prevent crashes, improve safety and save lives.



SEE & BE SEEN

In 2023, 19.1% of fatalities on Georgia's roads were pedestrians. See & Be Seen is the department's program to educate both motorists and pedestrians about the shared responsibility of paying attention when walking and driving.





SAFE DRIVING SUMMITS

These summits are part of an ongoing partnership between Georgia DOT and Lutzie 43 to educate high school students on the dangers of distracted, impaired and unsafe driving. The students hear from first responders at the scene of a crash including state and local law enforcement, ER/trauma doctors and nurses, as well as other



presenters about the realities of how decisions behind the wheel can potentially impact the lives of other roadway users and ultimately the students themselves for rest of their lives.



REACH HOME SAFELY

In the summer of 2024, Georgia DOT launched Reach Home Safely, a safe driving app to improve road safety and potentially prevent crashes for the users who are actively using the app while driving. As part of the GDOT Drive Alert Arrive Alive initiative, drivers have the opportunity to participate in contests to receive Atlanta Braves prizing for their great driving behavior on the roadways.



Scan to learn more.



KEEP GEORGIA SAFE: K-12 ROAD SAFETY FOR CLASSROOMS

In 2024, Georgia DOT launched a comprehensive, free K-12 Car and Road Safety Education Program for classroom use in partnership with We Are Teachers, a leading national educational media organization. This pioneering initiative aims to educate Georgia's youth about the importance of road safety, whether they are passengers in a car, riding a bike, or walking.

The five-year program, provided by Georgia DOT at no cost to schools, offers smart, ready-to-use classroom resources designed to instill vital road safety skills in students from a young age. These resources include detailed lesson plans for all grades, road safety activity books for grades 3-5, classroom posters, interactive activities, a virtual field trip across Georgia, an engaging driving game, and informative Kahoot quizzes. Educators are encouraged to incorporate these resources into their curriculum to help foster a safer future for Georgia's youth.









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