STATEWIDE STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN
Update

2013

Georgia Department of Transportation
Planning Division

Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan Update

2013

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Introduction

The Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP) is the official, intermodal, comprehensive, fiscally constrained transportation plan that includes projects, programs, and other activities to support implementation of the state's strategic transportation goals and policies. The SSTP was first approved by the State Transportation Board and Governor in June 2010, setting the strategic direction for future transportation investment within the state.[1] The SSTP was developed by following a strategic planning process that was outcome-driven, return-on-investment oriented, and based on best practices from the public and private sectors. It concluded that the right investment strategy supported by additional resources could transform Georgia's transportation network, generating billions of dollars in additional GDP growth and creating thousands of new jobs over the next 30 years.

This document is the first biennial revision of the SSTP as required by state law.[2] Since the original SSTP was adopted, the Regional Transportation Referendum was approved in three of twelve special districts in the state. These three areas will benefit from an additional $1.8 billion in transportation investments over the next ten years and should experience improved network performance as a result. Statewide, funding for transportation will likely be lower than previously forecast due to enactment of the current federal transportation funding bill "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21). MAP-21 also provides additional flexibility to help states make better decisions on delivering high-quality transportation projects. Since future performance is generally a function of the size and quality of investment made in the system, the state must get better performance out of the existing system by making high quality, cost-effective infrastructure investments where they will have the greatest benefit.

These recent developments notwithstanding, the goals, objectives, and strategies from the original SSTP remain the same and are summarized on the following pages. Status updates, recent developments, and next steps for implementation of the SSTP are also discussed. As such, this revision should be viewed as a compendium to the original SSTP, and the reader is referred to that document for details regarding the core analytics that underpin the recommendations. The next revision of the SSTP, which is currently underway and anticipated to be completed in the Spring of 2015, will include a more comprehensive top-to-bottom evaluation and update to the strategy in conjunction with the development of the federally required Statewide Transportation Plan.

[1] http://www.dot.ga.gov/informationcenter/programs/Pages/SSTP.aspx

[2] O.C.G.A. § 32-2-41.1(a)

Key Developments since 2010

The 2010 SSTP made a business case for increased transportation investment in Georgia. Two recent developments will have an impact on future transportation investments in Georgia. First, the current federal transportation funding bill "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act" (MAP-21) was signed into law on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 reduces expected future federal funding levels compared to previous forecasts, but it also contains provisions that support the state's goal to make more cost-effective investment decisions. Second, on July 31, 2012, the Regional Transportation Referendum was approved by voters in three of twelve special districts in the state, increasing the transportation revenue in these regions by a total of $1.8 billion over the next ten years, helping fund a portion of what the SSTP identified as critical transportation investments.

MAP-21

MAP-21 is the current federal transportation funding bill, authorizing funds for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, MAP-21 "transforms the policy and programmatic framework for investments...the cornerstone of [which] is the transition to a performance and outcome-based program. States will invest resources in projects to achieve individual targets that collectively will make progress toward national goals."[3] MAP-21 requires the development of performance measures for pavement conditions, bridge conditions, injuries and fatalities, traffic congestion, on-road mobile source emissions, and freight movement on the Interstate System.

Georgia already has performance measures for many of the goals envisioned under MAP-21. As part of the Department's performance management system, the "GDOT Performance Management Dashboard", and also as part of the SSTP Progress Report, the state already tracks a number of metrics that address the MAP-21 performance areas, as illustrated in Table 2 on page 6.

MAP-21 also places an emphasis on improving the national freight network. Georgia is one of the few states that have already completed a Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan[4].

The state's readiness to develop performance measures and complete a comprehensive freight plan provides Georgia with a competitive advantage to take advantage of opportunities under MAP-21 to improve the state's highway and freight network.

Regional Transportation Referendum

The Transportation Investment Act of 2010 (TIA), which enabled the Regional Transportation Referendum, created twelve special districts in Georgia and provided the citizens in each the opportunity to vote on a ten-year, one percent regional transportation sales tax to fund a list of transportation projects selected by their local elected officials. Three regions (the Central Savannah River District, the River Valley District, and the Heart of Georgia District) approved the referendum on July 31, 2012.

As required by TIA, the funds collected in each region must be spent in the region and are not subject to congressional balancing laws. Seventy-five percent of each region's proceeds will be used to fund the projects on the final investment list that was approved by the Regional Roundtable made up of mayors and county commissioners from the region. The remaining 25% of each region's proceeds will be divided among the region's local governments to be spent on transportation projects of each government's choosing. That money will be distributed using a formula based on population and road mileage.

The sales tax is expected to increase transportation investments by a collective total of $1.8 billion over the next ten years across the three regions where the referendum passed. Projects were selected for TIA funding based in part on criteria that reflected the SSTP's investment strategies, and the performance of

[3] http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/summaryinfo.cfm

[4] Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan, 2010-2050

the transportation network in these areas should improve.

While transportation resources are expected to increase in the regions of the state where the Regional Transportation Referendum was approved, MAP-21 is the first federal transportation re-authorization in recent history without a significant funding increase. As a result, expected future federal transportation funding levels will likely be lower than previously forecast. Since Georgia relies more heavily on federal transportation funds than most states[5], Georgia must continue to do even more with less, making strategic investment decisions that will give it a competitive edge over other states.

[5] Based on data from FHWA's 2010 Highway Statistics (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2010/sf21.cfm) and from the 2010 National Transit Database (http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/data.htm), in 2010, the percentage of Georgia's highway and transit funds that came from federal sources was 11th highest in the country.

Georgia's Transportation Goals and Objectives

The state's transportation goals and objectives were developed through a process designed to understand what is important to Georgia's transportation customers, addressing four key questions:

1. What do Georgia's citizens and businesses expect and need from their transportation network?
2. What levels of performance will attract and keep businesses and talent in Georgia's economy?
3. What characteristics or features in a transportation system will make Georgia an attractive place to live?
4. What will it take in terms of investment to drive growth across the state?

Through combining best practices, developing an understanding of customer needs and completion of stakeholder interviews, the state adopted four transportation goals, which are supported by ten specific, measurable performance objectives. These goals and objectives are summarized in Table 1 on page 5. Table 1 also contains the performance metrics the state is tracking to monitor progress toward achieving its goals as part of the semiannual SSTP Progress Report.[6] These goals and objectives are consistent with Governor Deal's vision for a lean and responsive state government that allows communities, individuals and businesses to prosper, including the Governor's goals to: Reduce injury and loss of life on Georgia's roads; improve the movement of people and goods across and within the state; leverage public-private partnerships and improve intergovernmental cooperation for successful infrastructure development; and expand Georgia's role as a major logistics hub for global commerce.[7] The SSTP's goals and objectives are also consistent with the goals outlined in MAP-21 as shown in Table 2 on page 6.

The state's strategic transportation investment strategy, described in the following section, derives from these goals and objectives.

[6] http://www.dot.ga.gov/informationcenter/programs/Documents/Reports/AttachmentE-SSTP-SB200.pdf

[7] http://opb.georgia.gov/strategic-planning

Table 1 Georgia's strategic transportation goals, objectives, and performance metrics

Goal		Objective	Performance Metric(s)
1	Supporting Georgia's economic growth and competitiveness	Improved access to jobs, encouraging growth in private-sector employment, workforce	• Average number of workers that can reach a major employment center by auto in 45 minutes in the AM peak period* • Average number of workers that can reach a major employment center by transit in 45 minutes in the AM peak period*
		Reduction in traffic congestion costs	• Annual congestion cost per peak auto commuter*
		Improved efficiency, reliability of commutes in major metropolitan areas	• Average work commute time* • Daily average number of people traveling in HOT/express lanes during the weekday AM and PM peak periods* • Daily average number of people taking rail trips during the weekday AM and PM peak periods*
		Efficiency and reliability of freight, cargo, and goods movement	• Daily hours of truck delay on Georgia Interstates
		Border to border and interregional connectivity	• % of population within 10 miles of a 4-lane state or US route
		Support for local connectivity to statewide transportation network	• % of state and federal transportation funds spent on local roads
2	Ensuring safety and security	Reduction in crashes resulting in injury and loss of life	• Reduction in annual highway fatalities
3	Maximizing the value of Georgia's assets, getting the most out of the existing network	Optimized capital asset management	• % of Interstates meeting maintenance standards • % of state-owned non-Interstate roads meeting maintenance standards • % of state-owned bridges meeting GDOT standards
		Optimized throughput of people and goods through network assets throughout the day	• Metro Atlanta highway morning peak hour speeds* • Metro Atlanta highway evening peak hour speeds* • Average HERO response time* • % of commute trips to major employment centers on transit* • Average transit operating cost per passenger*
4	Minimize impact on the environment	Reduce emissions, improve air quality statewide, limit footprint	• To be determined

* This metric is obtained for metropolitan Atlanta only.

Table 2 Alignment between MAP-21 goals and SSTP objectives and performance metrics

MAP-21 Goal		Corresponding SSTP Objective	GA Performance Metric(s)
To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System	⇒	Reduction in traffic congestion costs	• Annual congestion cost per peak auto commuter*
To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system	⇒	Improved efficiency, reliability of commutes in major metropolitan areas	• Average work commute time* • Highway peak hour speeds • Daily average number of people traveling in managed lanes during the weekday AM and PM peak periods* • Daily average number of people taking rail trips during the weekday AM and PM peak periods*
To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development	⇒	Efficiency and reliability of freight, cargo, and goods movement	• Daily hours of truck delay on Georgia Interstates
To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads	⇒	Reduction in crashes resulting in injury and loss of life	• Reduction in annual highway fatalities • Average HERO Response Time
To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair	⇒	Optimized capital asset management	• % of Interstates meeting maintenance standards • % of state-owned non-Interstate roads meeting maintenance standards • % of state-owned bridges meeting GDOT standards
To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment	⇒	Reduce emissions, improve air quality statewide, limit footprint	• To be determined
To reduce project costs by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process	⇒	Delivering projects on-time and on-budget	• Right-of-way authorized on schedule • Construction authorized on schedule • % projects constructed on schedule • % projects completed on budget

* This metric is obtained for metro Atlanta only.

Georgia's Transportation Investment Strategy

In support of the state's strategic transportation goals and objectives, the SSTP focuses on increasing the return on investment across three broad categories:

Investment Categories

- **Freight and logistics**
- **People mobility (excluding metro Atlanta)**
- **People mobility in metro Atlanta**

To this end, the SSTP recommends an integrated approach consisting of four investment strategies:

Investment Strategies

- **Add capacity where it will create the most benefit**
- **Coordinate transportation investment with development patterns**
- **Get the most out of existing infrastructure**
- **Implement plans for aviation, ports, and state-owned rail**

These investment categories and strategies are outlined below along with status updates and next steps for implementation.

Statewide Freight and Logistics

Georgia has a world-class freight infrastructure that is critical to the State's economic competitiveness. It was developed through several decades of outsized investment by both the public and private sector. Over the last 20 years, this investment has decreased, and this has in part been a contributor to the economic stagnation of Georgia relative to the rest of the U.S. since 2000; however, by investing $18-$20 billion over the next 40 years in freight improvement projects, the State could generate over $65 billion in additional economic output and thousands of new jobs.[8]

During the development of the SSTP, three hubs of freight and logistics activity emerged from an analysis of freight flows through and within Georgia: metro Atlanta, metro Savannah, and the Macon-Augusta corridor. Through interviews with shippers and analysis of the network, a few things were clear about connectivity and network capacity: First, metro Atlanta and Savannah are well connected inter-regionally and border-to-border through the Interstate system. However, both have first- and last-mile challenges getting freight to the Interstates from major freight hubs or distribution centers. Second, the entire Atlanta region has become a statewide bottleneck due to high congestion and the fact that nearly all Georgia Interstates pass through it. Third, there are a few inter-regional connectivity gaps on Georgia's network, despite the extensive Interstate system.

Investment Priorities: Statewide Freight and Logistics

Based on an analysis of potential solutions to these challenges, the SSTP established three priorities for freight and logistics investments statewide:

Investment Priorities:

[8] Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan, 2010-2050, Freight and Logistics Action Plan: http://www.dot.ga.gov/Projects/programs/georgiafreight/logisticsplan/Documents/Plan/GAFreightLogisticsPlan%20ExecutiveSummary.pdf

Statewide Freight and Logistics

- **Interchange improvements and last-mile connectivity are critical investments to be made even in the most limited funding scenario.**
- **New bypass facilities are high-priority "support future growth" investments if additional revenue sources can be developed.**
- **The state should preserve the option to create a new intermodal facility with the supporting facilities it might require. These programs would "transform the network" and are worth pursuing if there is private-sector interest and sufficient funding available.**

Status Update: Statewide Freight and Logistics

With limited new sources of transportation funds available, the SSTP identified interchange improvements and last-mile connectivity projects as critical investments to ensure Georgia's economic competitiveness. This was reinforced by the Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan recently completed by GDOT.

The Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan[9] identified and evaluated port, rail, highways, and air cargo projects and programs to relieve freight bottlenecks and improve freight traffic throughout the state. Projects recommended by the Freight and Logistics Plan include:

- Ports: Deepen Savannah Harbor, and develop Jasper port
- Rail: Develop the Crescent corridor, with improvements to other terminals and main lines
- Highways: Add capacity to select long-haul corridors, improve congested interstate interchanges, develop key bypass routes, improve key smaller urban and rural freight corridors, improve last-mile connectors in Savannah and Atlanta, and implement highway safety improvements
- Air cargo: Add warehouse capacity in Atlanta, and lengthen airport runway in Albany

The deepening of the Savannah Harbor is the top freight priority for Georgia. Adding capacity to I-85 between metro Atlanta and the South Carolina border is the greatest need in the state's long-haul corridor network. Improvements in the state's rail track and rail terminals are needed over the long haul to continue to move goods effectively on rail. Air cargo moves typically high-value, time-sensitive goods that can form a critical link in shipper supply chains, and therefore Georgia will need to maintain adequate access to air cargo facilities to ensure that this mode operates effectively.

Interstate Interchanges

The original SSTP recognized the importance of Interstate interchange improvements for goods movement, and this was supported by the Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan which identified seven specific interchanges in need of improvements in order to meet expected future freight demand:

- I-285 at I-75 and I-85 north of Atlanta
- I-20 east and west of Atlanta
- I-75 at I-16 in Macon
- I-95 at I-16 an I-95 at SR 21 in Savannah

Overall, the state is making good progress toward fixing these high priority interchanges. Of the four interchanges in metro Atlanta, the two I-20 interchanges currently have projects in the long-range Regional Transportation Plan or short-range Transportation Improvement Program that will add new capacity or operational improvements. The Northwest Corridor project includes the I-75 North interchange in Cobb County and is focused on providing HOT/express lanes but should also result in benefits for freight movements through the interchange. Other projects potentially impacting the movement of freight through the I-285 interchanges north of Atlanta include ITS improvements, variable speed limits and a ramp reconfiguration in the near term. Finally, HOT/express lanes and collector-distributor lanes are planned along I-285 in 2018-2030.

[9] The Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan, 2010-2050 may be found at: http://www.dot.state.ga.us/informationcenter/programs/georgiafreight/logisticsplan/Documents/Plan/GAFreightLogistics-FinalReport-Task5.pdf.

The two interchanges identified by the Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan for improvement in the Savannah area each have project phases in the area's current Regional Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program, and the system to system interchange at I-75 and I-16 in the Macon area is also programmed for improvement.

Last-Mile Connectivity

Significant progress is also being made in improving last-mile freight connectors in Savannah and metro Atlanta. Near the end of 2011, GDOT awarded a $73 million contract for the construction of the Jimmy DeLoach Connector. The roadway will link the Port of Savannah directly with the Interstate Highway System. As many as 10,000 trucks access the Port daily, and that number is expected to increase substantially in years to come. The 3.1-mile roadway is scheduled for completion in late 2015 and will serve as a critical improvement for accessing the Port. In addition, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) set aside $75 million for a "Freight Operations and Safety Program" for fiscal years 2014-2017. The goal of this program is to enhance, as quickly and efficiently as possible, the metro Atlanta freight transportation network that serves the regional economy. The focus is short term projects with high cost/benefit ratios that can be implemented without excessive delays. These projects all support the Governor's goal to expand Georgia's role as a major logistics hub for global commerce.

People Mobility (Excluding Metro Atlanta)

For medium-sized cities in Georgia (e.g., metro areas like Columbus, Augusta, Savannah, Macon, Athens, etc.) congestion levels are modest and in line with cities of similar size elsewhere. Further, local governments and MPOs were confident that they could keep congestion at bay as long as they could fund the investments in their long-range plans. Therefore, for other metro areas in Georgia (excluding Atlanta) the focus is on identifying these funding requirements and analyzing how demand management and alternative-development patterns could improve the effectiveness of those plans. For rural areas, the major performance gaps are around safety and the state should focus its resources in this area in addition to enhancing economic development by improving freight and logistics.

Investment Priorities: People Mobility (Excluding Metro Atlanta)

- **Enhance economic development by improving freight**
- **Implement the existing transportation plans and analyze how demand management and alternative-development patterns could improve the effectiveness of those plans**
- **Improve safety in rural areas**

Outside of metro Atlanta, the SSTP focuses on continued implementation of the transportation plans in smaller urban areas to keep congestion levels in check, as well as improving safety conditions and economic development opportunities in more rural areas. Since it is likely that future federal funding levels will be lower than previously forecast, Georgia must continue to do more with less, making smart investment decisions that will maximize network performance at the lowest cost.

Improve Safety in Rural Areas

GDOT has teamed with the Governor's Office to create the Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan to maximize and leverage all of the state's safety funding resources.[10] The overriding goal of this plan is to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries that occur on the state's roadways. In addition, GDOT has volunteered to implement the Integrated Safety Management Process, which will ultimately lead to a broader "Comprehensive Safety Plan" that involves the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, Federal Highway Administration, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, MPOs, local governments, and the law-enforcement community.

[10] The 2011 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan may be found at: http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/shsp/shsp2011.pdf.

Enhance Economic Development

Originally adopted by the Georgia General Assembly in 1989, the Governor's Roadway Improvement Program (GRIP) continues to improve accessibility to and safety for mid-sized cities and rural areas of the state. The GRIP program is envisioned as a system of economic development highways that, when complete, will connect 95 percent of Georgia cities with populations of 2,500 or more to the Interstate Highway System. It will also place 98 percent of Georgia's population within 20 miles of a four-lane road.

The Fall Line Freeway is a 215-mile freeway being constructed through middle Georgia by GDOT at a total current investment level of more than $500 million. GDOT recently announced the awarding of a construction contract for the route's final nine-mile section. Once completed, this GRIP project will result in a four-lane roadway stretching from Columbus to Macon to Augusta.

People Mobility in Metro Atlanta

The SSTP directs the state to focus its investment dollars in metro Atlanta on three performance areas: Improving the number of people who can reach a major employment center within 45 minutes; increasing the number of people taking "reliable" trips per day; and reducing the financial burden that congestion imposes on families through wasted hours and fuel (i.e., "congestion costs").

Investment Priorities: People Mobility in Metro Atlanta

In order to improve people mobility in metro Atlanta cost effectively, "balance" is the key. Road-only programs perform well on a standalone basis, but when one looks system-wide and accounts for changes in development patterns over time, these strategies underperform multi-modal ones. At the same time, strategies that focus too much on transit (particularly rail transit) also struggle, given metro Atlanta's low-density development pattern. The highest-performing strategies use "dual purpose" infrastructure like managed lanes as the base and complement them with targeted arterial and rail investments in denser employment centers. If funding permits, longer-haul rail transit could be layered in over time, as long as the right-of-way is being preserved now.

Therefore, the guidelines for existing and potential new sources of funds (if flexible) invested in "Atlanta people mobility" are:

Investment Priorities with Existing Funds: People Mobility in Metro Atlanta

- **Focus local-improvement funds and pedestrian-infrastructure investment on existing employment centers that have mixed-use zoning, transit, and clear plans to attract residential development**
- **Operate express buses in HOT/express lanes**
- **Weight arterial allocation toward employment center mobility/connectivity**
- **Weight towards high occupancy toll (HOT)/express lanes on Interstate vs. arterial roads**

Investment Priorities with New Funds: People Mobility in Metro Atlanta

- **Augment the BRT network and premium circulators with other long-haul rail transit that connects suburbs to the core**
- **Augment the BRT network with new short-haul transit services (circulators) and BRT stations**
- **Ensure the core transit system can operate at levels that maintain Atlanta's competitiveness with peer cities**
- **Expand Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to major employment centers**

Status Update: Atlanta People Mobility

In the absence of any new funding, the state must continue to focus on addressing today's critical needs

with existing funds: Providing faster, more reliable trips to the major metro Atlanta employment centers by expanding the HOT/express lane network, operating express buses in the HOT/express lanes, relieving congestion on arterials serving the most commute trips in the region, and improving last-mile connectivity in the employment centers.

HOT/Express Lane Network

The SSTP envisions a comprehensive HOT/express lane system for metro Atlanta that combines 770 miles of new capacity with demand management that vary with congestion levels and time of day. In November of 2008, the U.S. Department of Transportation Congestion Reduction Demonstration (CRD) Program awarded a $110 million grant to the Atlanta region to support a $182 million transportation improvement project in the I-85 corridor. The project was designed to provide more reliable travel times, commuter choices, regional transit enhancements that will increase the *Xpress* commuter coach service in the corridor, support related park-and-ride lots, and add more *Xpress* coaches. Included in the program was the conversion of a 16-mile stretch of I-85 from Old Peachtree Road to Chamblee Tucker Road from High Occupancy Vehicle to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes. The CRD initiative was implemented by GDOT, the State Road & Tollway Authority, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) and a number of federal, regional and local transportation partners. Since their opening in October 2011, usage of the I-85 HOT lanes has more than tripled.

PLAN 2040 is the current long-range regional transportation plan for metro Atlanta, adopted by ARC in 2011.[11] Although the development of PLAN 2040 was well underway at the time the original SSTP was completed, ARC worked to incorporate the SSTP's recommendations into PLAN 2040. For example, if implemented as planned, PLAN 2040 would create a network of over 300 lane miles of HOT/express lanes throughout the region—completing a substantial portion of the HOT/express lane network envisioned in the SSTP.

Finally, in an effort to expedite implementation of the HOT/express lane system in metro Atlanta, GDOT recently kicked off the Atlanta Regional Managed Lanes Implementation Plan (MLIP). The MLIP will reflect current funding constraints and the knowledge gained by GDOT from projects implemented around the country since the Atlanta Regional Managed Lane System Plan was published in 2010. Specifically, the MLIP will focus on identifying feasible locations for capacity-adding projects, redefining and reprioritizing projects from the previous plan based on current and future needs, and developing a funding plan for implementing these projects. The intent is to have a prioritized list of managed lane projects that reduce the state's reliance on long-term private financing agreements.

Employment Center Mobility

ARC is currently working to update PLAN 2040 by the end of 2013 to address the new requirements in MAP-21, to better align PLAN 2040 with revised, lower federal funding forecasts, and to adjust project scopes as needed. As part of this update, GDOT, GRTA, and ARC collaborated on a framework to prioritize existing revenue streams toward the investments that drive the performance measures in the SSTP. A key element of this framework will be a corridors-focused arterial program that will prioritize investments for facilities in metro Atlanta that serve the most trips into the employment centers and are the most congested. Progress made in the development, implementation, and performance of this framework will be tracked and reported in the semiannual SSTP Progress Report.

Last-Mile Connectivity

ARC set aside $50 million for a "Last Mile Connectivity Program" for fiscal years 2014-2017 in the Transportation Improvement Program. Among other emphasis areas, this program supports local pedestrian and bicyclist circulation within activity centers, consistent with the SSTP strategy for Atlanta people mobility. The projects funded by this program, especially when coupled with transit, can improve the livability of an area while providing residents with more affordable transportation options and access to greater economic opportunities.

[11] PLAN 2040 may be found at: http://www.atlantaregional.com/plan2040

Getting the Most Out of the Existing System

A key investment strategy is getting the most out of existing transportation infrastructure. The following programs exemplify how the state achieves this goal.

Transportation Asset Management

Organizational Performance Management (OPM) is a unit within the Georgia Department of Transportation that is responsible for several strategic initiatives. Included among OPM's responsibilities is the development and implementation of a risk based, data driven Transportation Asset Management Program. This data driven process will guide Georgia DOT leaders in making the best decisions to address the infrastructure needs of Georgia's roadway system. A key component of this initiative is the development of a Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP). The TAMP is a MAP21 requirement that documents the strategic and systematic process of operating, preserving, upgrading, and expanding physical assets effectively through their life cycle. It focuses on engineering practices and performance based results for resource allocation, with the objective of better decision-making based on quality information and well defined objectives. TAM entails moving away from a "worst first" method of infrastructure replacement to a more data driven methodology that targets investment where the risk to mobility is greatest. GDOT has integrated TAM principles into its strategic planning process. The Asset Management Steering Committee meets monthly to oversee development of the TAM plan, the Asset Management and Performance Management Implementation Plans and the data governance process. Future efforts will include development of strategies for further incorporating TAM principles into the culture of the Department.

Metro Atlanta Operational Planning Study

GDOT recently kicked off the Metro Atlanta Operational Planning Study to provide an operational assessment of the Interstate and limited access system in the metro Atlanta region. Specifically, the study will:

- Identify bottleneck areas along the limited access facilities in the metro Atlanta region;
- Identify and evaluate potential low-cost improvements that can maximize capacity; and
- Document a prioritized list of operational projects.

This study is a coordinated effort with the Atlanta Regional Managed Lanes Implementation Plan (see page 11 above).

Towing Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP)

TRIP is a GDOT program funded through Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) funds. It provides financial incentives for the quick clearance of incidents involving large commercial vehicles on metro Atlanta interstates. The goal of the program is to clear these incidents as quickly as possible to minimize traveler delay. It achieves this goal by utilizing only pre-qualified towing operators who have undergone special training and have the appropriate equipment to respond to these types of incidents.

On average, roadway clearance times have decreased by 2 hours and 45 minutes since the program's implementation in 2007. Prior to TRIP, the cost of such incidents averaged over $600,000 per incident (in terms of delay, wasted fuel and excess emissions). After TRIP implementation, the cost dropped to less than $200,000 per incident. The cost savings of a single incident are greater than the present cost of the entire program for a full calendar year.

Highway Emergency Response Operators (HERO)

Highway Emergency Response Operators (HERO) is a GDOT program that is funded with National Highway System funds. Additionally, it receives funds through a sponsorship agreement with a private corporation. The purpose of the HERO program is similar to that of the TRIP program, in that it seeks to keep metro Atlanta roadways clear following incidents. However, whereas the focus of the TRIP program is on incidents involving large commercial vehicles, the HERO program is focused on incidents involving passenger and/or small commercial vehicles.

Regional Traffic Operations Program (RTOP)

RTOP is a multi-jurisdiction, signal timing program operated by GDOT with the goal of improving traffic

flow and reducing vehicle emissions through improved signal timing. Under this program, GDOT works with local jurisdictions to make corridor signal timing seamless as motorists traverse multiple jurisdictions. Thus far, the program has been implemented through two phases. A third phase is presently being implemented, while a fourth phase is anticipated in September 2013. The program received the Smart Solutions Spotlight Award from ITS America in 2010.

Over the past two years, RTOP (Phase 1) has realized the following benefits during peak travel periods:

- Reduced number of vehicle stops by 8.3%;
- Reduced stopped time delay by 12%;
- Traffic volume throughput increased by 9%;
- Prevented an estimated 1.2 million hours of delay;
- Saved approximately 700,000 gallons of fuel.

I-285 Variable Speed Limits

GDOT recently announced a new program to introduce a variable speed limit on the northern portion of I-285. Under this program, GDOT's Transportation Management Center would monitor real-time traffic volumes and congestion levels via their existing Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) infrastructure in order to adjust the speed limit in such a way as to reduce stop-and-go traffic and related incidents. Similar systems are in place elsewhere, including Seattle where it is believed to be reducing congestion levels. If successful on I-285, it could serve as a low cost alternative that could be more widely implemented across the region.

Travel Data Availability

The availability of real-time travel data has increased exponentially in recent years. GDOT has contributed to the availability of this data primarily through the NaviGAtor system and the 511 system.

The NaviGAtor system is the Atlanta region's primary source of real-time information about current travel conditions. It includes roughly 1,645 cameras installed approximately every 1/3 mile along most major interstates around Atlanta. These cameras provide continuous speed and volume data allowing the system to generate travel times for overhead changeable message signs. The system also includes another 500 full-color closed circuit cameras positioned about every 1 mile on most major interstates in Atlanta, which allow for the monitoring of roadways to confirm incident details, dispatch HERO units and request appropriate emergency responses.

In addition to the changeable message signs, the NaviGAtor system feeds travel data to its own website on a constant basis. Here motorists can learn about any delays they may expect and seek alternative routes prior to ever leaving their homes.

GDOT also provides the 511 system. This toll-free number provides free, real-time travel information from any phone, anywhere in Georgia. It also is able to tap into the NaviGAtor system for travel data information in metro Atlanta.

Demand-Management in Urban Areas

Demand-management programs reduce the need to invest in new transportation infrastructure by "smoothing out" asset utilization. This may mean diverting commuters and commercial traffic to off-peak times of day and less-congested modes (e.g., transit, vanpooling) and facilities, or encouraging people to telecommute or carpool instead of driving alone.

There are, however, other demand-management tools and programs that are important for Georgia. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and Travel Demand Management (TDM) are two of the most significant "non-pricing" programs. The state should continue to invest in ITS infrastructure in order to ensure the most effective use of our transportation network. GDOT has done well with ITS infrastructure, starting prior to the 1996 Olympic Games. However, increased investment in new ITS applications and a steady commitment to ITS maintenance are critical to its ongoing success.

Going hand-in-hand with the need for ITS applications is a continued investment in incident management. Over 50% of the congestion in the Atlanta region is caused by non-recurring incidents. Incident management increases the operating efficiency, safety, and mobility of the highway by systematically reducing the time to detect and verify an incident occurrence; implementing

the appropriate response; safely clearing the incident while managing the affected flow until full capacity is restored; and providing motorists with enough information about the incident to make knowledgeable decisions. These programs must be expanded as Georgia continues to grow.

Commute Option/TDM programs today are implemented throughout Georgia by the Clean Air Campaign in cooperation with Transportation Management Agencies and Employer Service Organizations. These organizations work directly with employers to promote carpooling and transit. In metro Atlanta, ARC also plays a coordinating role. Collectively, these organizations work with more than 1,650 employers in Georgia. These successful programs will need sustained financial support to continue current efforts and to expand as warranted.

CommuteSmart Program

The CommuteSmart Program is a recent initiative from Governor Deal to reduce commute times and increase the efficiency of state government employees. The program encourages state agencies to implement one or more of the following program options:

- Flextime – scheduling shifts to avoid peak traffic times;
- Alternative Work Schedules – compressing a typical 40-hour work week into fewer, longer workdays to reduce commuting;
- Teleworking – allowing an employee to work from home or another approved location;
- Commute Options – promotes using alternatives such as carpooling, vanpooling, riding transit, biking or walking to work.

Critical Investments

Among the investment priorities outlined in the original SSTP, a number were identified as critical to keeping Georgia economically competitive and should be made even in the most limited funding scenario. These critical investments may be grouped into the same three broad SSTP investment categories, and they include:

Critical Investments	
Statewide freight and logistics	• **Freight bottleneck relief at Interstate interchanges** • **Last-mile connectivity to ports and freight and logistics centers**
People mobility (excluding metro Atlanta)	• **Bridge maintenance/ replacement/upgrades** • **New arterial capacity** • **Safety**
People mobility in metro Atlanta	• **Core transit operations** • **Express buses in HOT/express lanes** • **HOT/express lanes on Interstates** • **New arterial capacity** • **Safety**

Next Steps

The SSTP documents the state's strategic transportation goals and outlines, at a high level, what it will take in terms of resources, investments, and policies to achieve these goals and keep Georgia economically competitive. For example, the SSTP recommends that investment in new arterial road capacity in metro Atlanta be weighted toward facilities that improve employment center mobility and connectivity. An execution framework is currently under development that will identify the most congested, highest traveled corridors serving commutes into metro Atlanta's employment centers. It will also determine the most cost-effective solutions and prioritize the investments in these solutions.

The basic components of an execution framework and how it fits into a performance management system are illustrated in Figure 1. Executing the SSTP includes setting performance targets that, if attained, would achieve the state's strategic transportation goals, allocating resources to projects and programs that drive the performance measures toward the targets, and implementing the resulting projects and programs. The purpose of the SSTP Progress Report is to track the execution of the SSTP, i.e., the strategic allocation of funds and the on-time/on-budget delivery of projects, and to measure the resulting performance of Georgia's transportation network. This information can then be included as part of a performance management system to monitor performance and to inform investment decisions.

This framework is currently under development by GDOT and transportation stakeholders throughout the state. This Progress Report and the GDOT's Performance Management Dashboard will provide decision makers with valuable data and tools to make sound funding decisions.

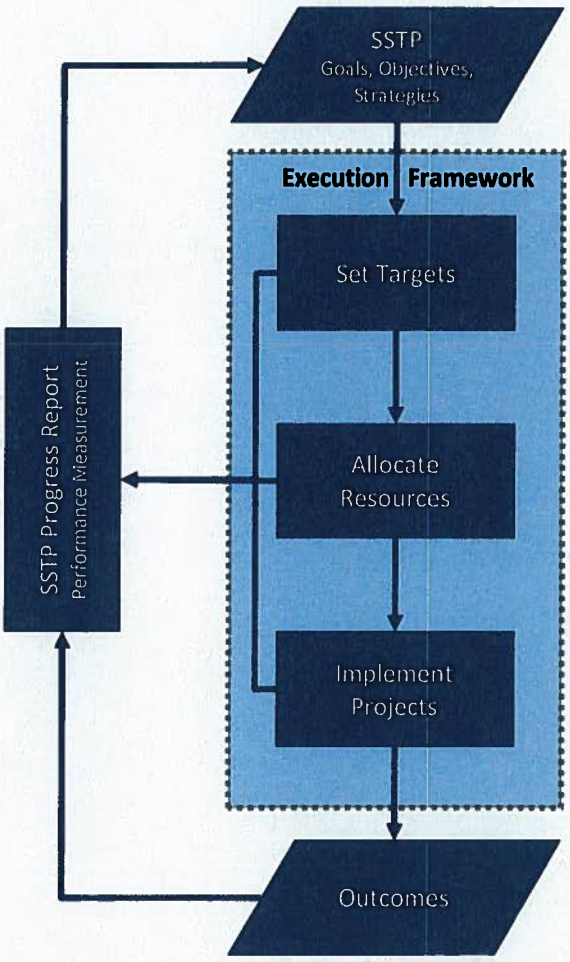

Figure 1 The SSTP execution framework (blue shaded box) is a key element of a performance management system that will help ensure transportation investments in Georgia are strategically allocated, executed on time and on budget, and deliver results.

Conclusion

This document is the first biennial revision to the SSTP. The goals, objectives and strategies of the original SSTP remain the same. In order to achieve these goals given current and expected future funding levels, the state must continue to do more with less. To this end, the state will build upon its performance management system to prioritize existing revenue streams toward the critical investments that drive the performance measures in the SSTP. In addition, the state is continuing to implement a number of very cost-effective and successful programs (e.g., TRIP, HERO, and RTOP) to help get the best performance out of the existing system.

It is anticipated that the next SSTP revision will include a more comprehensive top-to-bottom evaluation and update to the strategy in conjunction with the development of the federally required Statewide Transportation Plan.

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