



Southwest Georgia Interstate Study

Stakeholders Meetings

October 14, 2009





Study Purpose

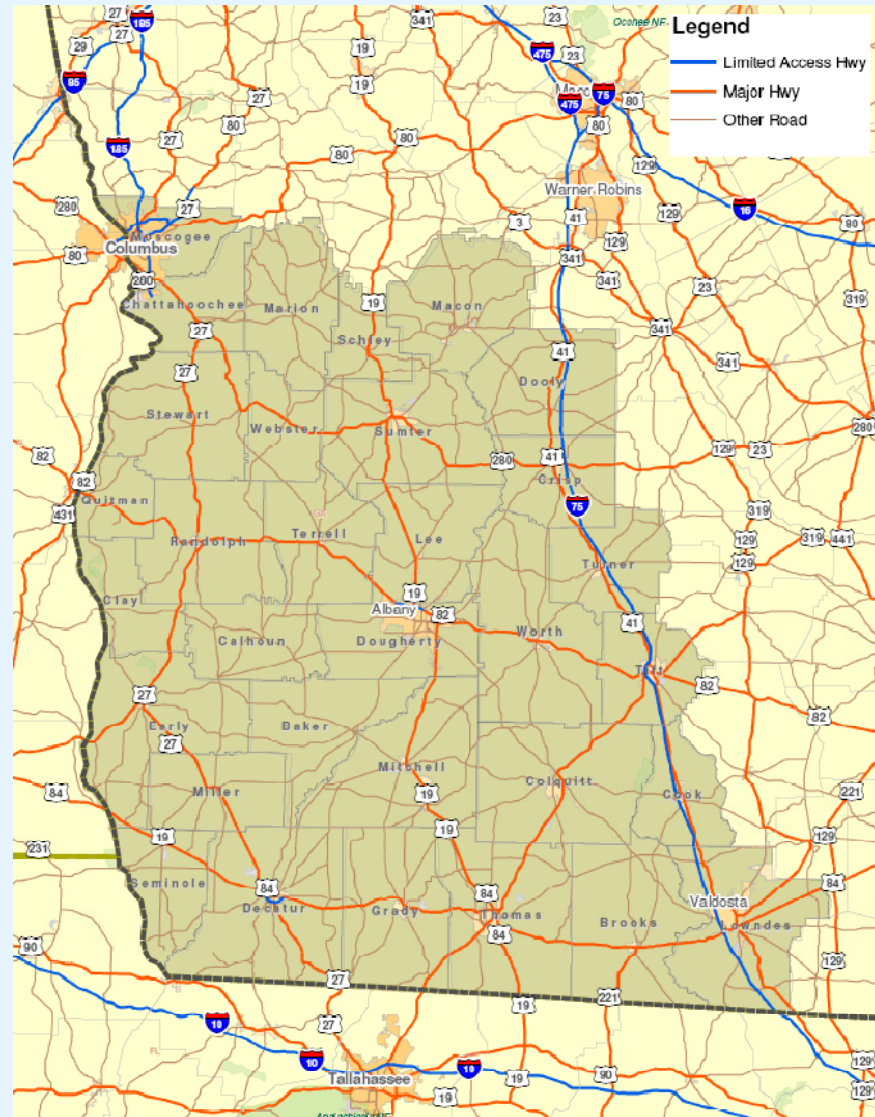
To investigate Southwest Georgia's capacity & operational needs to improve the region's access to existing Interstates.



Study Area - 32 Counties

Counties

Baker	Marion
Brooks	Miller
Calhoun	Mitchell
Chattahoochee	Muscogee
Clay	Quitman
Colquitt	Randolph
Cook	Schley
Crisp	Seminole
Decatur	Stewart
Dooly	Sumter
Dougherty	Terrell
Early	Thomas
Grady	Tift
Lee	Turner
Lowndes	Webster
Macon	Worth

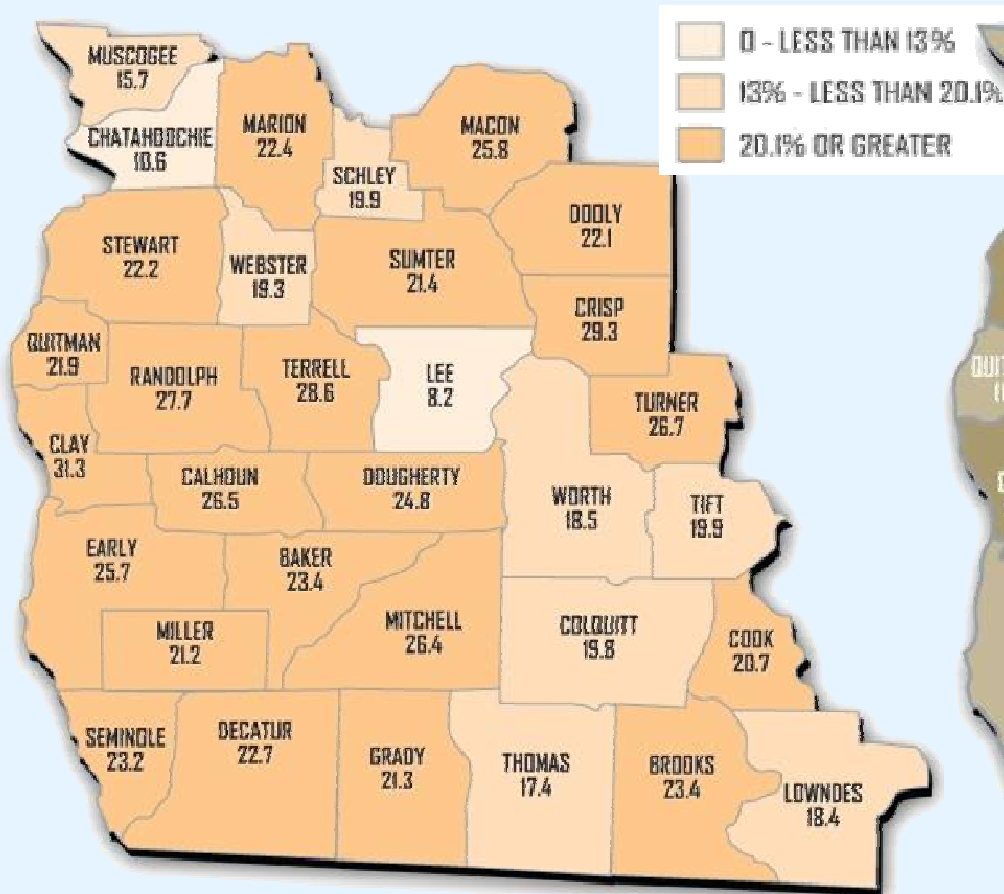


Major Activities

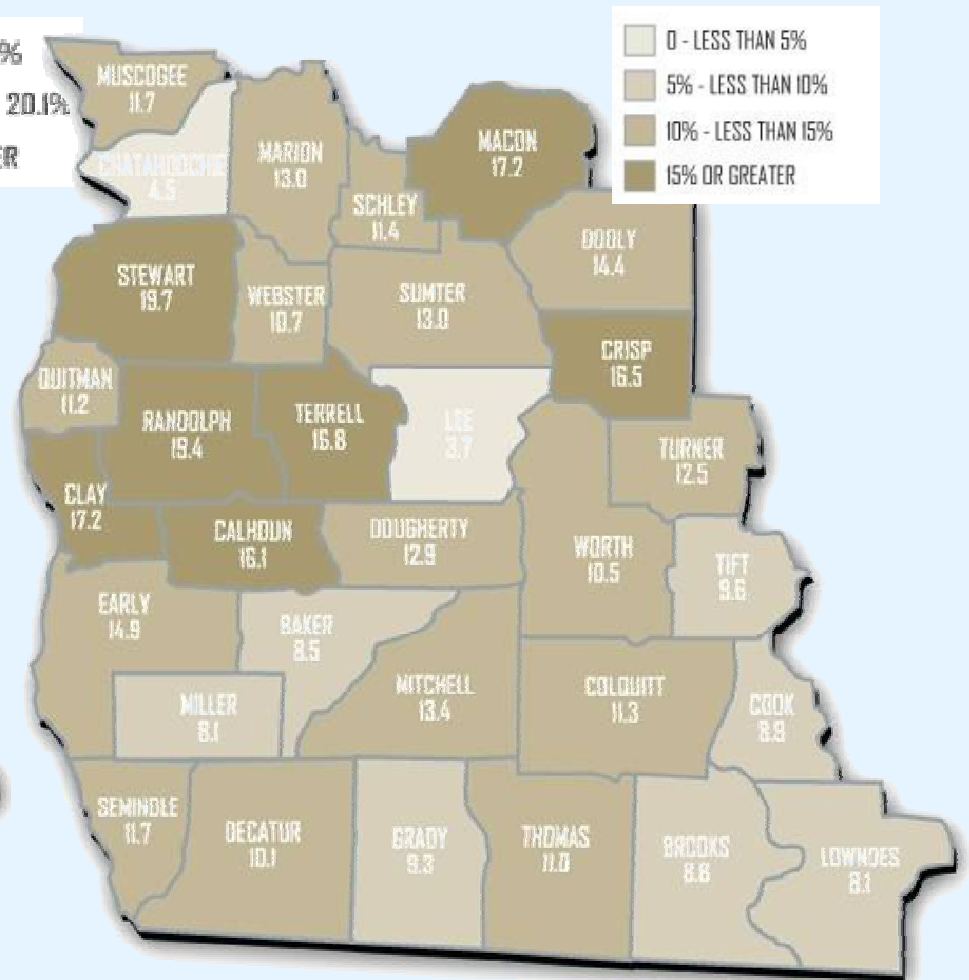
- **Forecasted future (2040) traffic volumes**
 - Future forecasts based on locally adopted Comprehensive Plans
- **Explored 4 potential Interstate Alignments, considering:**
 - Travel Needs/Benefits
 - Economic Benefits
 - Land Use and Community Impacts
 - Environmental Impacts
 - Costs
- **Explored non-Interstate Improvements as well**
- **Conducted Stakeholder and Public Outreach**

Study Area Characteristics

**Percent of County Population
With Low Income**



**Percent of Housing Units
With No Vehicle**



Source: 2000 US Census



Public Involvement Activities

- **Two Rounds of Stakeholder Meetings (67 Attendees)**

Spring '08

Moultrie

Dawson

Late Summer '08

Moultrie

Americus

- **Two Rounds of Public Meetings (183 Attendees)**

Spring '08

Bainbridge

Columbus

Thomasville

Americus

Late Summer '08

Albany

Thomasville

Blakely

Cusseta

- **Stakeholder Survey – 40 responses**
- **Surveys distributed via School Students – over 4,500 responses**
- **Website – www.swgainterstate.com – (50 comments received)**

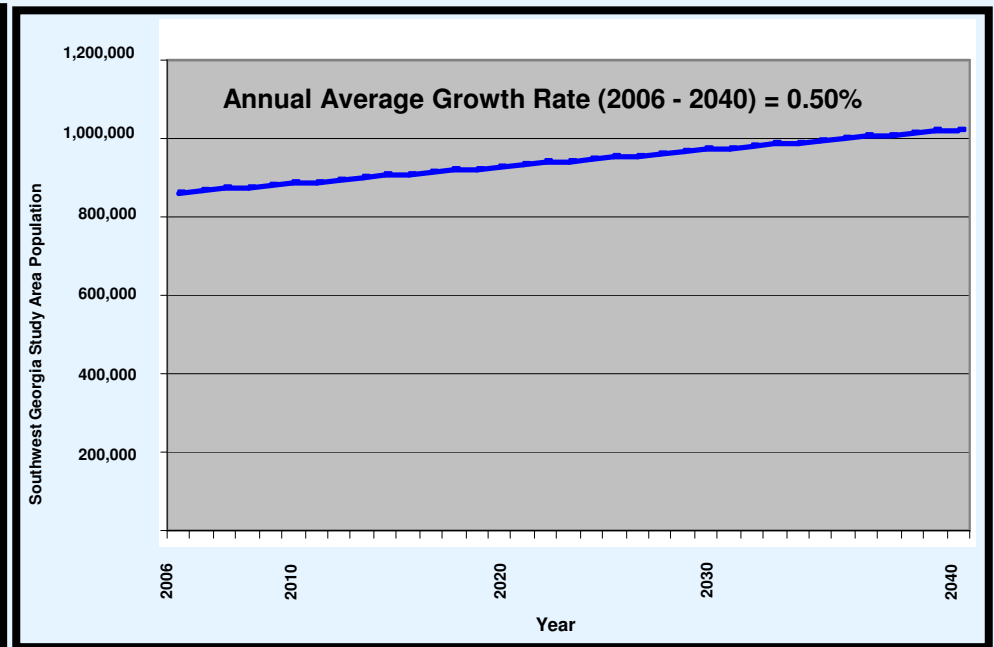
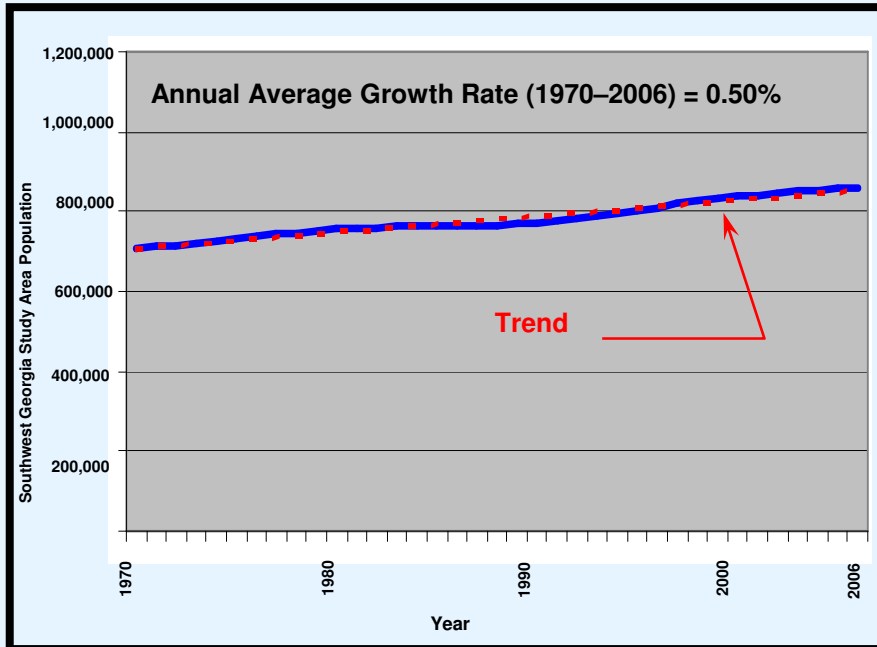


Public Involvement Activities

- **Received results from 4,500 School Surveys**
- **70% - 80% have experienced transportation problems**
- **Top Issues / Concerns**
 - **Speeding**
 - **Tractor trailer trucks**
 - **Intersection safety**

Study Area Characteristics

Population Change



Source: U.S. Census , Study's Trend Analysis, and county-adopted comprehensive plans

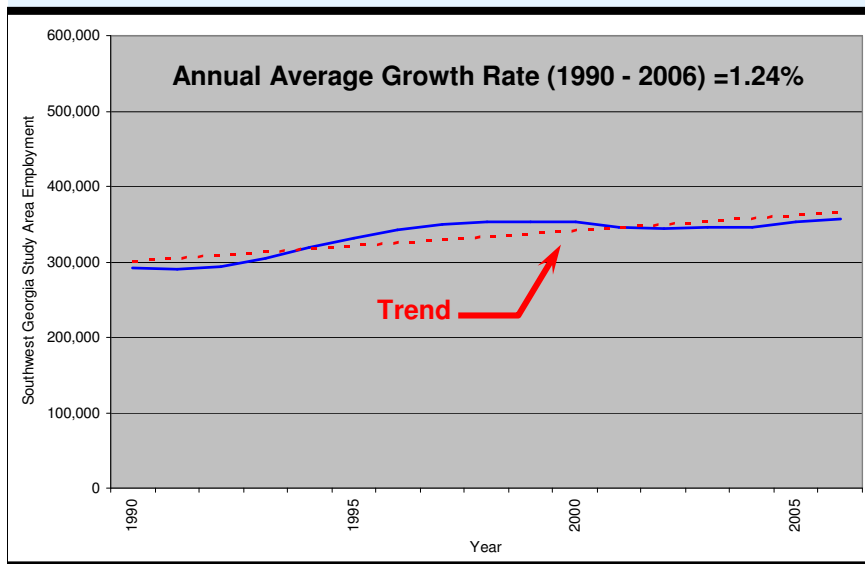
Source: US Census, Study's Trend Analysis, and county-adopted comprehensive plans

Minimal Population Growth
1970 - 2006

Continued Slow Growth
2006-2040

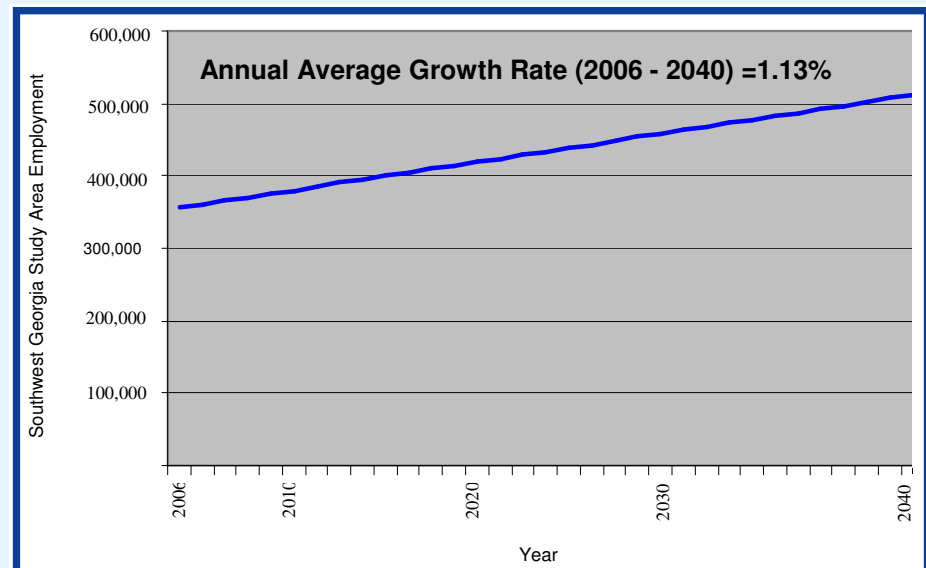
Study Area Characteristics

Employment Change



Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor & Study Trend Analysis

Minimal Employment Growth 1990 - 2006



Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor & Study Trend Analysis

Continued Slow Growth 2006-2040

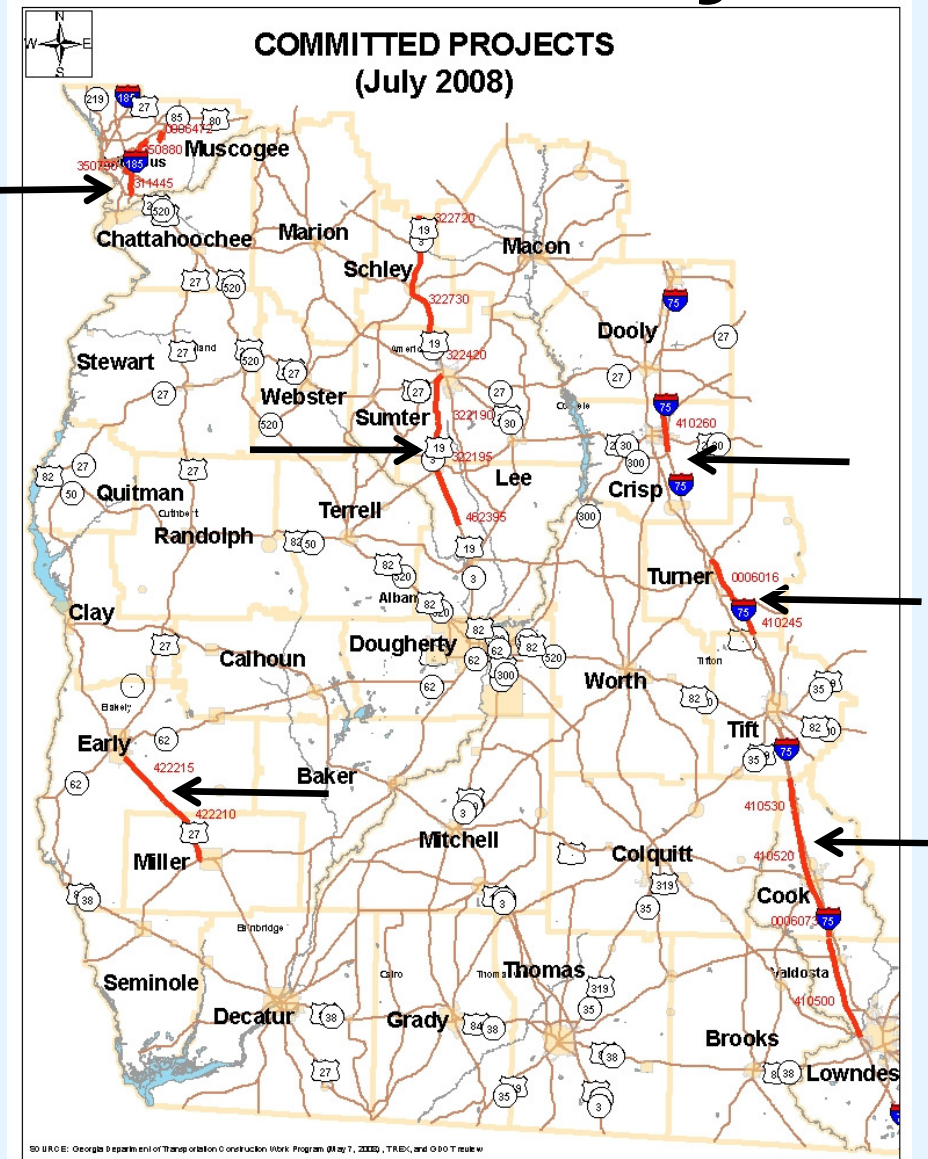


2040 Existing + Committed Projects

Improvements

- Widen I-185 from 4 to 6 lanes
- Widen I-75 from 4 to 6 lanes
- Widen US 19/SR 3 from 2 to 4 lanes
- Widen US 27 from 2 to 4 lanes

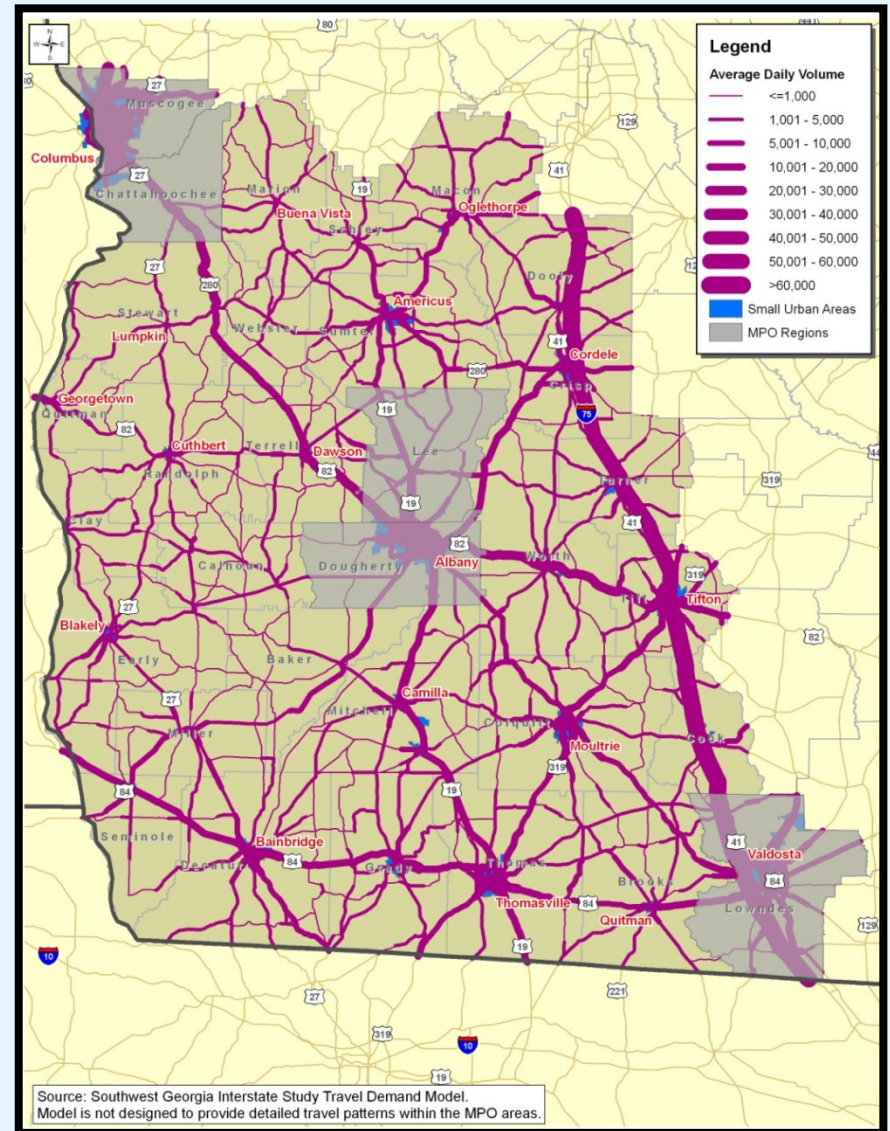
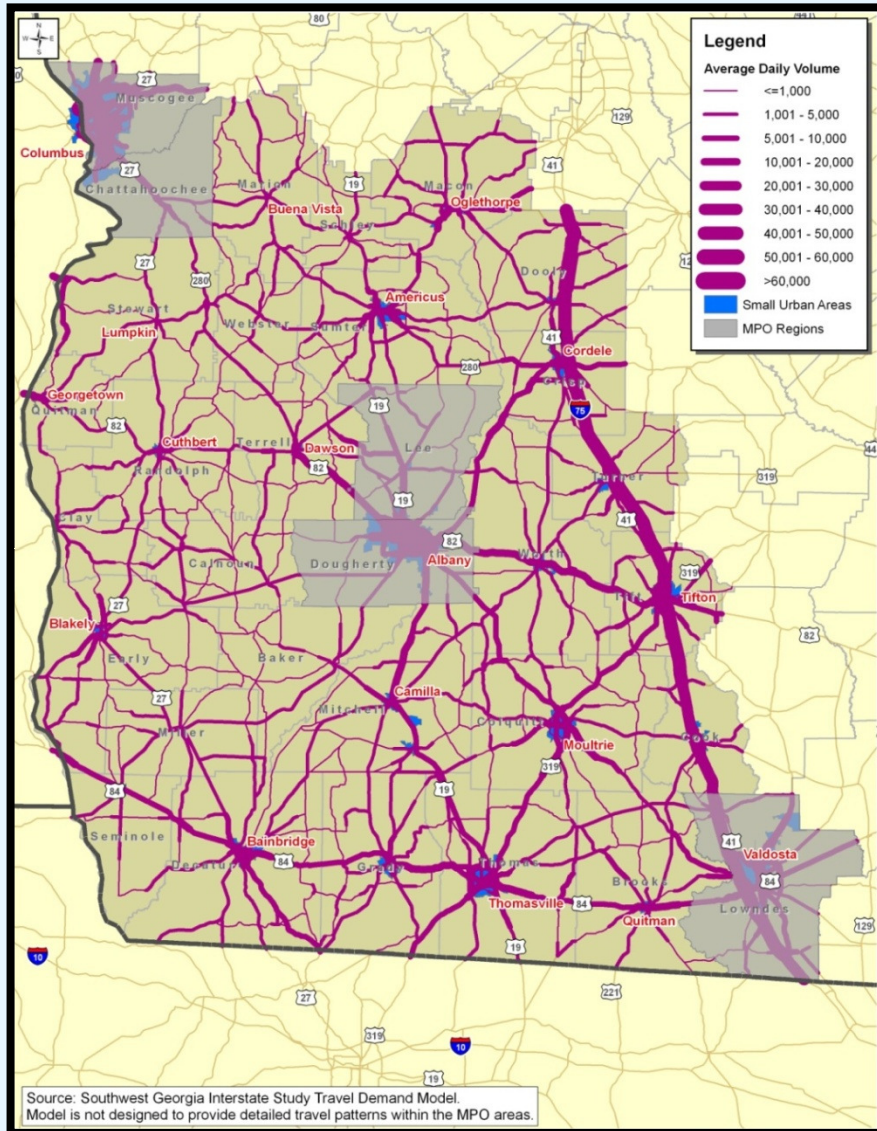
The above projects were under construction during the course of the study and were assumed to be open to traffic for analysis purposes.



Total Daily Travel Volumes

Base Year (2006)

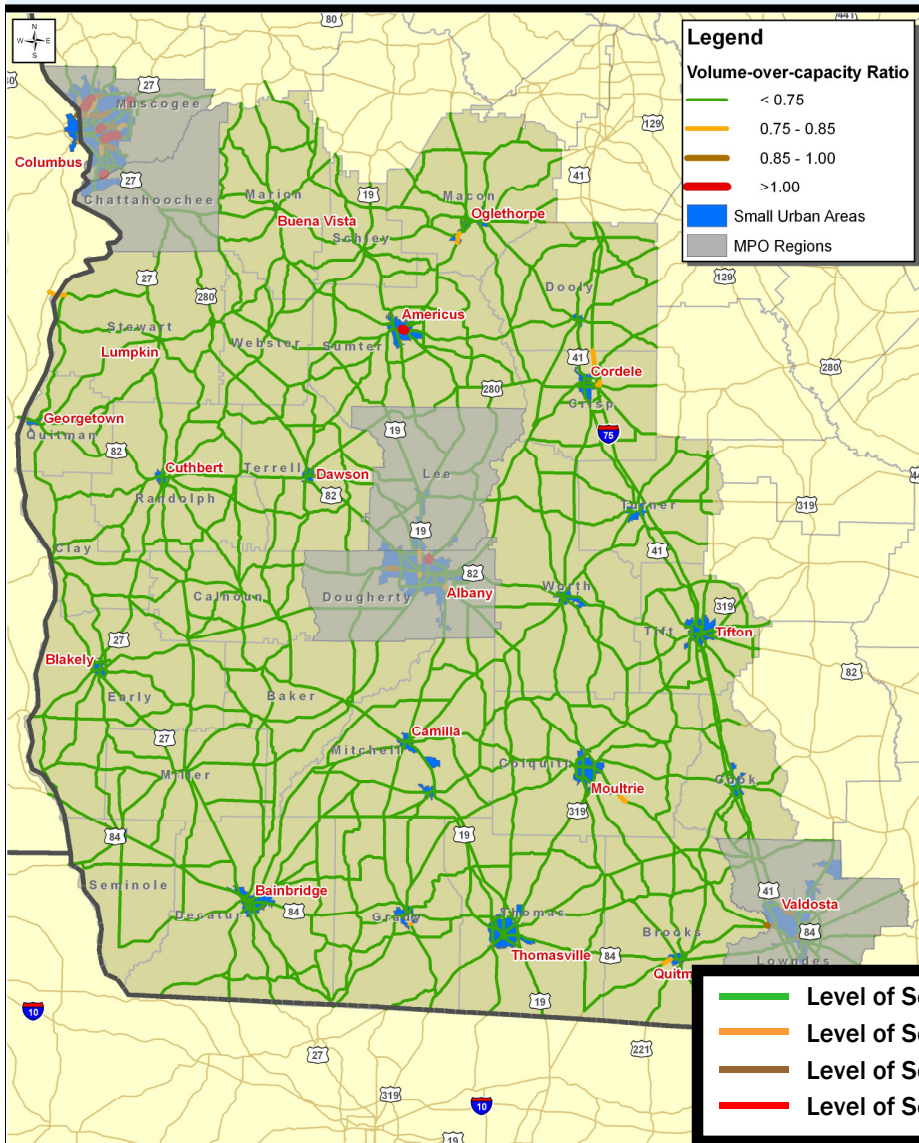
Future Year (2040) "No Build"



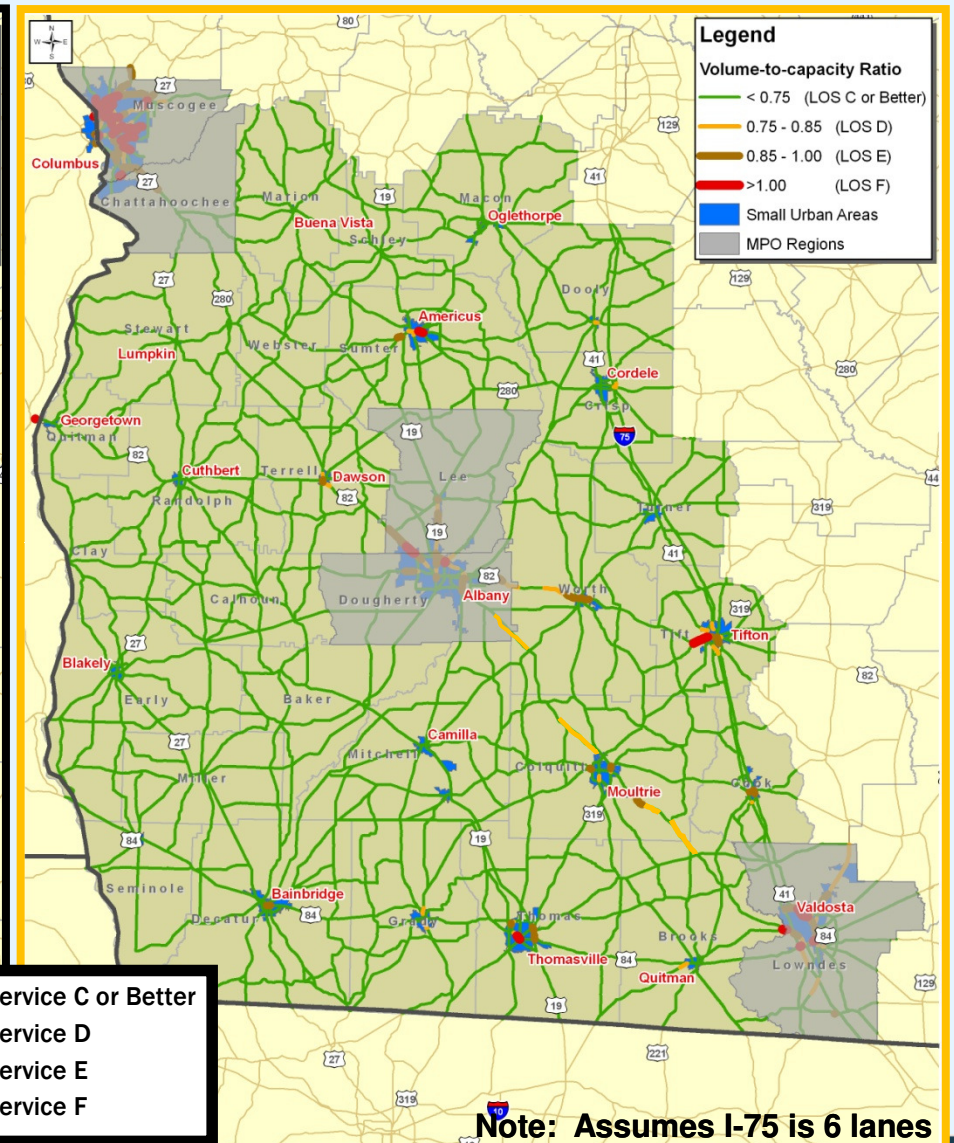
Level-of-Service Analysis

Base Year (2006)

Future Year (2040) "No Build"



Source: Southwest Georgia Interstate Study Travel Demand Model. Model is not designed to provide detailed travel patterns within the MPO areas.



Source: Southwest Georgia Interstate Study Travel Demand Model. Model is not designed to provide detailed travel patterns within the MPO areas.

Note: Assumes I-75 is 6 lanes



Initial Candidate Corridors

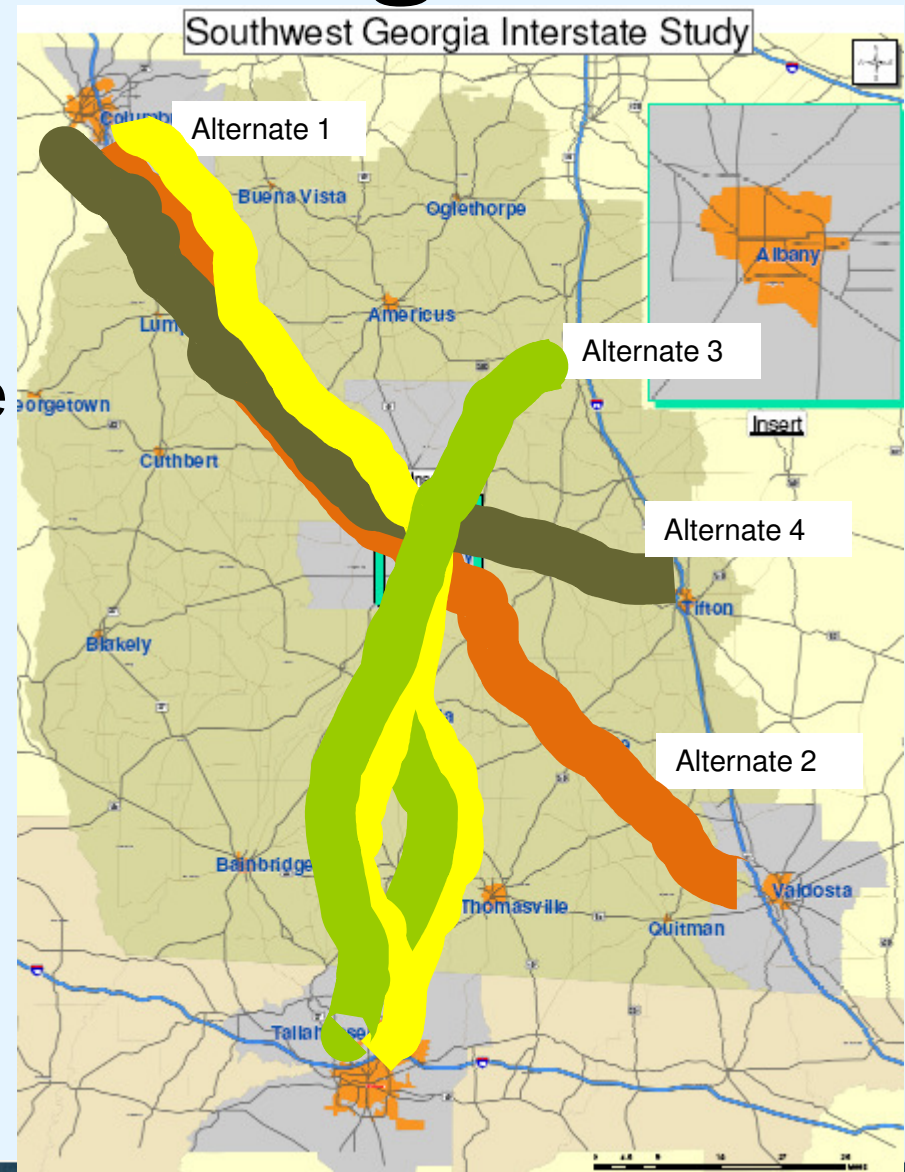
- ***Performed General Screening to identify alignments for detailed analysis***
 - *Travel impacts*
 - *Mobility needs*
 - *General project costs*
 - *Community impacts*
 - *Comprehensive Plans - Land use*
 - *Environmental concerns*
- ***Identified four alignments for more detailed evaluation***

Evaluated Interstate Alignments

Studied Alignments

- 1/1A: Columbus to Tallahassee
- 2: Columbus to Valdosta
- 3/3A: Cordele to Tallahassee
- 4: Columbus to Tifton

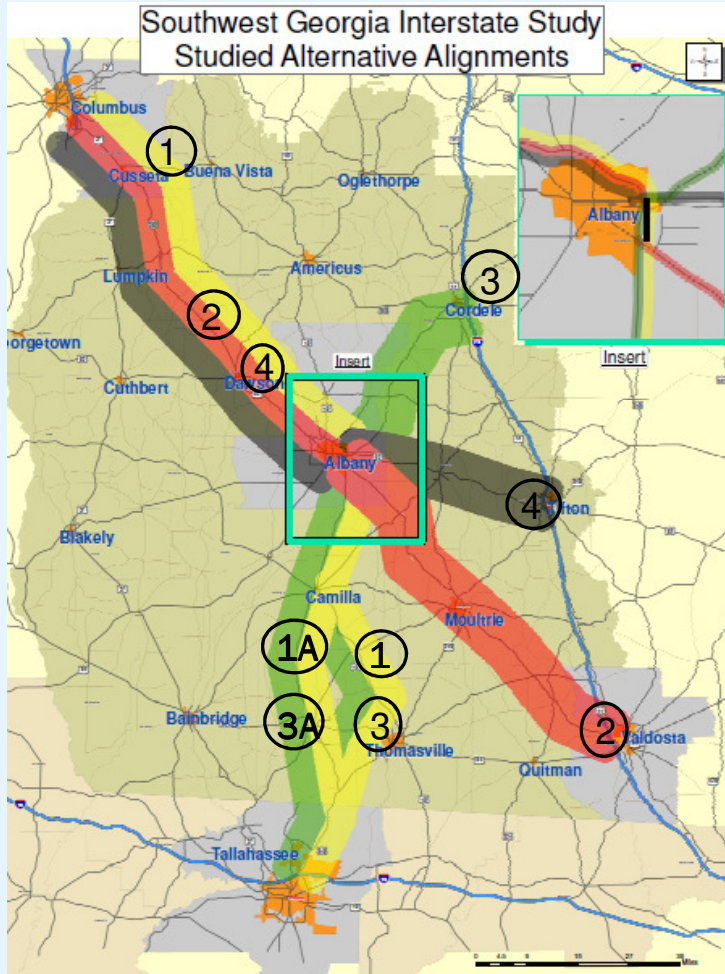
*Note:
Studied Interstate Alignments would be
on separate right-of-way parallel to
existing facilities*





Studied Interstate Alignments

Percent Change in 2040 Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
from E+C

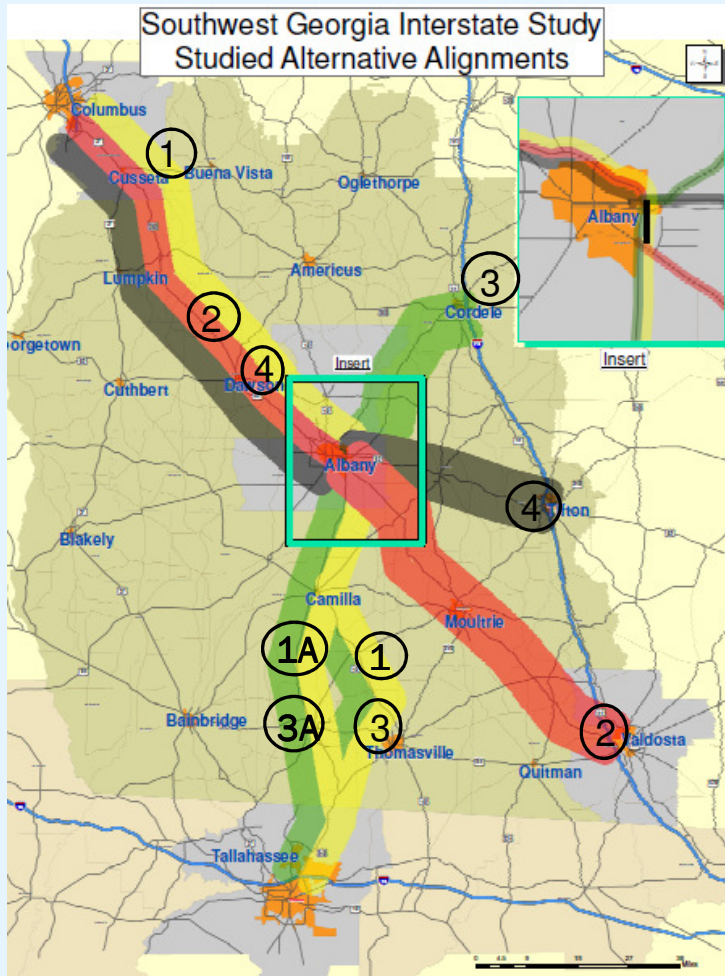


Alternate	Study Area
1	2.2%
1A	2.4%
2	2.7%
3	0.8%
3A	1.6%
4	2.3%



Studied Interstate Alignments

Percent Change in 2040 Daily Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT)
from E+C



Alternate	Study Area
1	-1.4%
1A	-1.4%
2	-2.5%
3	-2.2%
3A	-1.8%
4	-1.9%



Studied Interstate Alignments

Land Use and Community Assessment

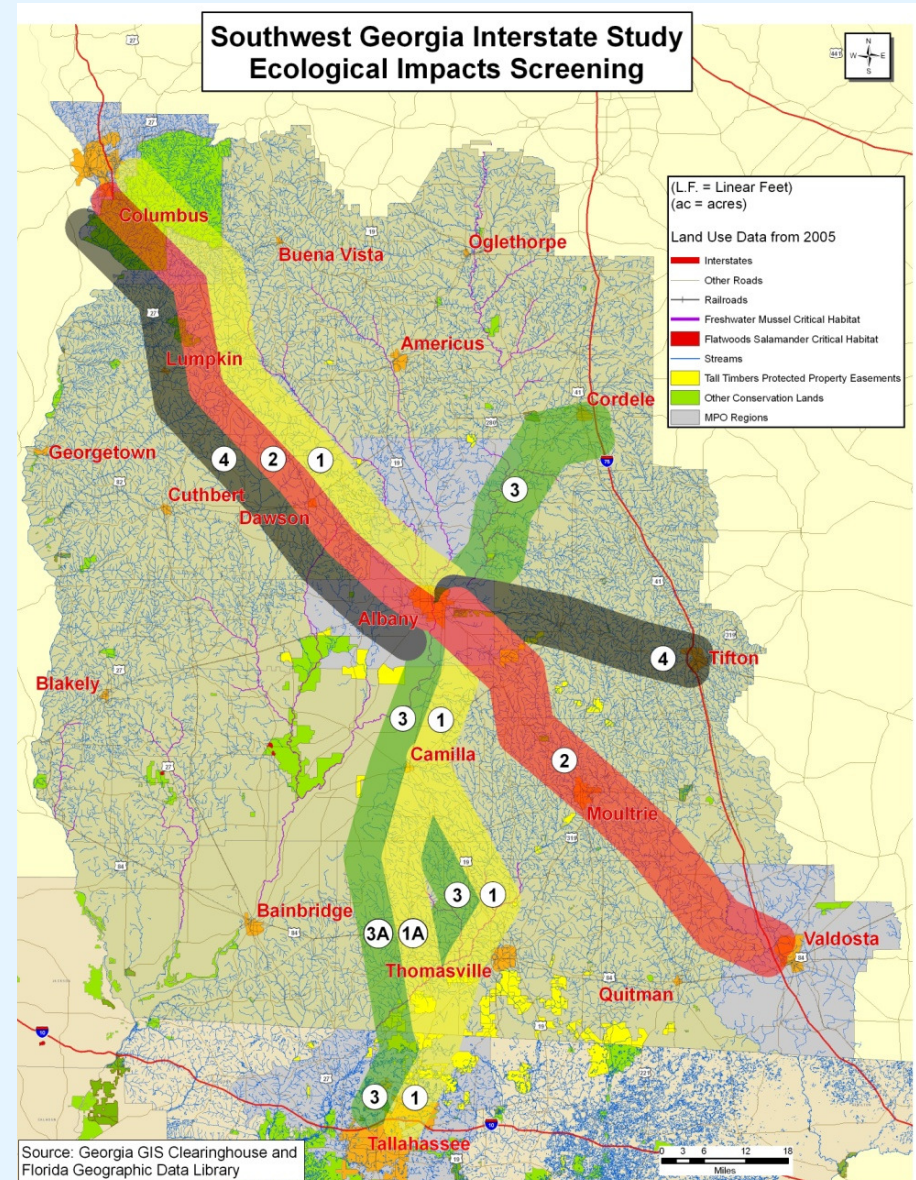
- **All alignments were found to have the following:**
 - X Inconsistent with current Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policies**
 - X Detrimental impacts on Poverty and Minority populations**
 - X Negative impact on Prime Agricultural Lands and Historic and Cultural Assets**
 - ✓ Consistent with Economic Development Policies**
 - ✓ May improve accessibility to Higher Education Facilities, Job Training Facilities, Healthcare Facilities and Employment Centers**
- **Overall Alignments 2 & 4 have slightly more adverse impacts**



Studied Interstate Alignments

Preliminary Environmental Impacts

- X Alternatives 1 & 3 could impact up to 30 acres of conservation lands
- X All alignments have significant impact on Forest and Agricultural lands





Studied Interstate Alignments

Potential Environmental Impacts

Alternate	Streams (Linear Feet)	Wetlands (Acres)	Land Use			
			Residential (Acres)	Commercial (Acres)	Forest (Acres)	Agricultural (Acres)
1	56,506	276	584	170	2,455	1,802
1A	49,137	203	609	186	2,353	1,856
2	47,500	140	539	152	1,755	2,439
3	42,177	346	294	85	1,781	1,398
3A	34,808	273	319	101	1,679	1,452
4	39,890	100	628	163	1,610	1,416

Source: Georgia GIS Clearinghouse and Florida Data Library



Benefits Used in Analysis

- **Transportation Benefits**
 - Reduce vehicle operating costs
 - Reduce travel times
 - Improve safety (possibly avoid some accidents)

- **Economic Development Benefits**
 - Expand market access for existing industry
 - Expanded market supports additional growth and potential diversification



Transportation Benefits Are Mixed

- **VMT increases as travelers drive further to get on new interstate facility (negatives)**
 - **Vehicle operating costs rise with greater average trip length**
- **VHT minimally reduced as travelers save time by using the new interstate facility (positive)**
- **Accidents might be reduced as drivers divert to limited access roads (positive)**



Studied Interstate Alignments

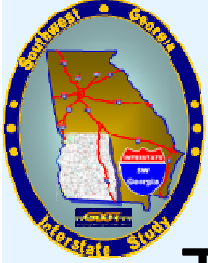
Preliminary Cost Estimates (2008 dollars in billions)

Alternate	Preliminary Engineering	Right-of-Way	Utilities	Construction	Total	Benefit / Cost Ratio
1	\$0.21	\$0.54	\$0.082	\$2.61	\$3.44	0.058
1A	\$0.21	\$0.57	\$0.073	\$2.64	\$3.45	0.092
2	\$0.20	\$0.51	\$0.077	\$2.51	\$3.30	0.217
3	\$0.17	\$0.25	\$0.060	\$2.11	\$2.58	-0.042
3A	\$0.17	\$0.28	\$0.051	\$2.10	\$2.59	-0.051
4	\$0.14	\$0.50	\$0.060	\$1.79	\$2.49	0.333



Recommendations

- **Do not pursue constructing an Interstate in Southwest Georgia**
- **Focus on completing existing GRIP route widenings, especially on key corridors:**
 - **SR 133**
 - **US 27**
 - **Further investigation of other upgrades**
 - **Shoulder widenings**
 - **Signage**
 - **Minor lane widenings , passing lanes, lane width standardization**
 - **Improvements through various towns/cities**



Next Steps

- **Third and Final Round of Public Meetings in November**
 - **Nov 2 – Thomasville at 5 p.m.**
Southwest Georgia Technical College - Sewell Building D
15689 US Highway 19 North
 - **Nov 9 – Albany at 5 p.m.**
Albany State University - L. Orene Hall
504 College Drive
 - **Nov 12 – Cusseta at 5 p.m.**
Chattahoochee County Middle and High School Cafeteria
360 Highway 26
- **Publish Final Report - December 2009**

Southwest Georgia Interstate Study



October 2009