

# *Lower Savannah Intermodal Network*

*A Transportation Primer  
for the Lower Savannah Region*



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Lower Savannah Long Range Priorities



# *Lower Savannah Intermodal Network*

## **1 Geographic Characteristics of the Region**

The Lower Savannah region lies in the west-central area of South Carolina, bordering the Savannah River. The six counties of Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg make up the Lower Savannah region, to include forty-five municipalities in a total area of 3,981 square miles. The centralized location and pastoral open spaces of the region help to provide a relaxed country lifestyle while maintaining convenient access to some of South Carolina's larger communities as well as the state's coastal regions.

The topography of the Lower Savannah region is for the most part rural in nature and the terrain is gently rolling in much of the region, yielding few impediments to urban or agricultural development. The region is characterized by low relief, with a few localized areas having wetlands, flatlands and steep hills. The primary species of tree in the area is the loblolly pine. Shortleaf pine, longleaf pine, slash pine, sweet gum and oak are also predominant in forested areas.

Typical of southeastern areas in that it has a humid subtropical climate, the Lower Savannah region is characterized by ample rainfall, mild winters and hot summers. The climate is suitable for many agricultural, economical and recreational endeavors. Droughts are not uncommon but generally do not last long enough to cause severe crop damage. There are occasionally heavy rainfalls in the summer months due to tropical storms and hurricanes, but these occurrences are rare. The growing season in the region is approximately 245 days, which accommodates a wide variety of crops.

## **2 Development**

### **2.1 Physical Growth and Development**

The rate of growth and development can in large part be determined by studying the changes in land use in the region. Growth management can better be

accomplished by identifying the current land uses and projecting future uses based on a number of factors, including population estimates and projections, commercial, residential and industrial development, and existing land use conflicts.

Table 2.1 identifies characteristics of land use in the region. As revealed by a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of the existing land use map prepared from information obtained from the University of South Carolina GIRAS, the predominate “use” of land in the Lower Savannah region is forest land. Nearly 63% of the land coverage in the region is forested, primarily with evergreen forest. Mixed forest and areas of scrub/shrub land cover also contribute to the forest cover in the region. The majority of the wetland coverage in the region is saturated bottomland forest, with nonforested wetland/marsh land area coverage being minimal throughout the area.

**Table 2.1. Land Use - Lower Savannah Region**

County	Percent of Land Cover					
	Urban	Agriculture	Forest	Barren	Water	Wetland
Aiken	6.25	18.53	62.72	0.05	1.06	11.39
Allendale	1.31	23.10	48.90	0.03	1.42	25.24
Bamberg	1.34	26.56	50.15	0.33	0.11	21.51
Barnwell	2.07	17.17	62.61	0.38	2.69	15.08
Calhoun	0.96	21.58	61.21	1.03	3.04	12.18
Orangeburg	2.54	25.22	55.78	0.63	1.84	13.99
REGION	3.08	21.82	57.89	0.39	1.65	15.18
STATE	4.70	15.90	61.32	0.40	6.56	11.15

Source: 1998 South Carolina Statistical Abstract

The Lower Savannah region contains a small percent of urbanized area, with Aiken County being the most urbanized county with 6% urban land use and Calhoun County being the least urbanized area with 1% urban land use. When compared to the state average of urban area, it is evident that the region is nearly 2% less urbanized than the entire state.

### **3 Population**

#### **3.1 Population Trends**

Population trends in the Lower Savannah region can best be measured by the US Census, which despite its historical propensity for errors remains the most comprehensive benchmark for United States demographics. According to census data, the population of the Lower Savannah region was 300,666 in the year 2000. Two-thirds of the population reside in the rural, unincorporated areas of the region. The majority of Lower Savannah residents live in Aiken and Orangeburg counties, which together contain 77.9% of the total population of the

region, although 64.1% of Aiken County and 77.9% of Orangeburg County's population live in the unincorporated areas.

A population trend analysis for the region reveals that while Aiken, Barnwell, Calhoun and Orangeburg counties experienced population growth between 1990 and 2000, Allendale and Bamberg counties experienced a loss in population in the past decade, and in fact suffered an overall loss in population between 1950 and 2000 (see Table 3.1). Though the Lower Savannah region as a whole grew in population at an average of 10.5% between 1950 and 2000, slightly lagging behind the state, which grew an average of 13.7% during the same 50-year span, the majority of the population growth occurred in Aiken County, which had an average growth rate of 22.6% during the 50-year period. The growth in Aiken County was especially pronounced between 1950 and 1960, when the county experienced a growth rate of 52.5%, in large part due to the tens of thousands of jobs created by construction of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Plant, or Savannah River Site (SRS). Despite mass layoffs at SRS beginning in 1991, Aiken County continued to see a growth in population between 1990 and 2000.

**Table 3.1. Population Trends**

County	Population						% Change '50-'00	%Change '90-'00
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000		
Aiken	53,137	81,038	91,023	105,625	120,991	142,552	168.3	17.8
Allendale	11,773	11,362	9,783	10,700	11,722	11,211	-4.8	-4.4
Bamberg	17,533	16,274	15,950	18,118	16,902	16,658	-5.0	-1.4
Barnwell	17,266	17,659	17,176	19,868	20,293	23,478	35.0	14.9
Calhoun	14,753	12,256	10,780	12,206	12,753	15,185	2.2	18.2
Orangeburg	68,726	68,559	69,789	82,276	84,803	91,582	33.3	8.0
REGION	183,188	207,148	214,501	248,793	267,464	300,666	64.1	12.4
STATE	2,117,027	2,382,594	2,590,713	3,121,820	3,486,310	4,012,012	89.5	15.1

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1950-2000

In addition to measuring the growth of the Lower Savannah region by comparison of county trends, examination of growth by census tracts more critically delineates the high growth areas in the region as well as the areas with little growth or a reduction in population. Only two census tracts, both within the Augusta-Aiken MPO, experienced a growth rate of over 10%. The high growth areas are listed below:

- Western Aiken County, west of the City of North Augusta, bordering Edgefield County
- Central Aiken County, south of the City of Aiken, between SC Highway 302 and SC Highway 19
- Central Aiken County, southwest and southeast of the City of Aiken

- Northwestern Calhoun County, the “Horse’s Neck” region, along I-26
- South Barnwell County east of SRS, along Allendale County border

Some identifiable characteristics common to these high growth areas are convenient access to interstate or multi-lane roadways, greater population density, and progressive economic development activity. These three commonalities seem to be essential for population growth and constructive development.

### 3.2 Population Projections

The areas with the highest historical growth appear to be areas of high growth potential in the next ten years. Table 3.2 reflects population projections by

**Table 3.2. Population Projections**

County	Population			
	1990	2000	2010	2020
Aiken	120,991	142,552	174,800	214,340
Allendale	11,722	11,211	11,150	11,090
Bamberg	16,902	16,658	16,540	16,410
Barnwell	20,293	23,478	25,000	26,610
Calhoun	12,753	15,185	16,420	17,760
Orangeburg	84,803	91,582	96,780	102,280
REGION	267,464	300,666	340,690	388,490
STATE	3,486,310	4,012,012	4,561,660	5,186,610

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990-2000; LSCOG decade to the year 2020.

Based on these forecasts, the census tracts with the highest projected growth include the following areas:

- Western Aiken County, west of the City of North Augusta north of I-20
- Central Aiken County, south of the City of Aiken, between SC Highway 302 and SC Highway 19
- Central Aiken County, southwest and southeast of the City of Aiken
- The I-26 corridor in Calhoun and Orangeburg Counties, particularly the “Horse’s Neck” region in Calhoun County
- The I-95 corridor and Santee Cooper lakes area in Orangeburg County
- The SC Highway 4 corridor between Livingston/Neeses and Orangeburg
- South of the City of Barnwell
- South Allendale County, including the Town of Fairfax

It should be noted that this is merely one logical method of projecting the population of the area; an abundance of unforeseeable circumstances such as economic development activity could dramatically impact the estimate. However,

based on this projection method we could assume that the population of the Lower Savannah region may grow to approximately 388,490 residents by the year 2020. This represents approximately 29.2% increase in the population between 2000 and 2020.

## **4 Activity Centers**

The residents of the Lower Savannah region enjoy all of the pleasures traditionally associated with rural and small town life while maintaining convenient access to the amenities offered by some of the state's larger metropolitan areas. The region also offers many advantages for industries to locate in the area: competitive wages, tax advantages, and a relatively low cost of living. Additionally, government and educational facilities are easily accessible throughout the region. Outdoor recreational and tourism related activities are also available to the residents of the Lower Savannah region in the form of several state parks, rivers and lakes, museums, festivals, the South Carolina Heritage Corridor, and many other natural and cultural resources. Amenities such as the Atlantic coast, metropolitan areas such as Columbia, SC and Augusta, GA, and the mountains are all close enough for day or weekend visits.

### **4.1 Business and Industry**

Though it is primarily a rural area, the Lower Savannah region contains numerous business and industrial sites. Each of the region's six counties contains at a minimum one industrial park. Generally, community facilities such as local government offices and educational centers are within municipal boundaries and/or are located along major thoroughfares. One of the foremost challenges to transportation and land use policy is the propensity of local school districts and higher education institutions to locate new schools in the rural areas outside of municipal cores. The disappearance of the neighborhood school tends to place a burden on the existing transportation network.

Allendale County has eight industry sites and one regional mall within its boundaries. Six industries are located south of Allendale on US Highway 278. The sites are also north of Fairfax, which is located on the southern border of the county. US Highway 278, which leads south out of the region and north to Barnwell County, is the main thoroughfare for industrial areas in the southwestern part of the region. The other two industrial areas in the county are located in the northwest and northeast section of the county. The lone regional mall in the county is located in the Town of Allendale.

Bamberg County is home to twelve industrial sites and one office site. Six, or half, of the industries are located in the county seat of Bamberg. One of the industrial sites is located between Bamberg and Denmark on US Highway 78. US Highway 78 connects Aiken, Barnwell, and Bamberg counties; many industries are located along this stretch of highway. Southwest of Denmark there are two more

industrial sites that are between US Highway 78 and State Road 70. On the county's northern border there are three more industries along the Edisto River. The final industrial site is located in the southern part of the county just east of Ehrhardt. The lone office site in the county is located in Bamberg.

Interstate 26 travels through Calhoun County and has eleven industrial sites along it. From the northwestern border of Calhoun County to the southern border, Interstate 26 is critical to industry in the county. While St. Matthews, the county seat, is the location of over five industries, the bulk of industry is located alongside Interstate 26. One industrial site is located in the northeastern section of the county. Two more industrial sites are located south of St. Matthews, with one located on US Highway 176 and the other on US Highway 601. Cameron, located in southeast Calhoun County, is home to two additional industries located on State Road 33, just northeast of Cameron. The only office park in Calhoun County is located in St. Matthews.

A large portion of Barnwell County is used by the Savannah River Site, making it unavailable for industrial development. However, the rest of the county has a good number of industry sites. Most of the industries are located on either State Road 3 or along US Highway 78. Five industrial sites are located along US Highway 78. Four of the sites are located in the western part of the state in Williston. Three of those four sites are located southwest of the town. Blackville is home to five industrial sites, two of which are located on US Highway 78 and three of which are located on State Road 3. State Road 3 connects Blackville with the county seat of Barnwell. Barnwell is the most developed of all of the municipalities in the county. Barnwell has seven industrial sites near the city and one that is between the city and Snelling. Most of the industrial sites are located along State Road 3, however, State Road 64 and US Highway 278 are also home to industrial sites around the county seat. Barnwell is also home to four office sites. Most of the sites are located north of the city, but one is located in downtown Barnwell.

Tri-County Economic Development Alliance (TCA) is a regional non-profit industrial development agency for Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties. TCA is responsible for recruiting new industry to the region and assisting local businesses to grow and succeed in the Tri-County area. TCA manages the new South Carolina Advanced Technology Park located near Barnwell in the Town of Snelling.

Orangeburg County is fortunate to have two interstates, I-95 and I-26, going through it. Both of these interstates are keys to development in the county. On the eastern tip of Orangeburg County is Santee, which borders Lake Marion and is located on I-95. Santee's accessible location has led to several office sites being developed around the city. Southeast of Santee is Holly Hill, located on US Highway 176. There are numerous industries located along State Road 453, which intersects in Holly Hill with US Highway 176. Also in the eastern part of the county is the intersection of I-95 and I-26, which is currently undergoing a major

industrial park development. Elloree, just northwest of Santee, has two industries near the town and one located on State Road 6 between Elloree and Santee.

Interstate 26 plays a key role in the accessibility of industry to its sites. For this reason, industry has boomed along the I-26 corridor in Orangeburg County. From the north there are several industrial sites at the intersection of I-26 and US Highway 601. While there is no municipality in that area, Orangeburg, the county seat, is nearby. Further south on I-26, the intersection with US Highway 301 there are two industrial sites. A few more miles to the south on I-26 there are two additional industrial sites.

Branchville, the southern-most city in Orangeburg County, has five industries surrounding the city. The intersection of US Highway 21 and US Highway 78 is where most of the industrial activity occurs in Branchville. The western-most city in the county, Springfield, is home to two surrounding industrial sites. One of the sites is located along the Aiken County border and State Road 4. The other industrial site is also located on State Road 4 at its intersection with State Road 39. The northern part of the county has three industries. These sites are located between the towns of North and Woodford, located on US Highway 321.

Orangeburg, the county seat, has a plethora of industrial sites to the southeast of the city. Most of the industries are positioned alongside US Highway 21, going south towards Branchville. There are a few industrial sites to the east on both US Highway 301 and State Road 33. However, the vast majority of industrial centers in the area are located on US Highway 21 south of its intersection with US Highway 178. There are two office sites in Orangeburg and there is one regional mall in the city. North Orangeburg also has one shopping center.

Aiken County is the most diverse in terms of business and industry in the region. While the northern part of Aiken County does not have an industrial site, the southern part of the county is well developed. Like Barnwell County, Aiken County has a portion of its land used by Savannah River Site, and therefore it cannot be developed by private industry. The Aiken-Edgefield Economic Development Partnership is located in the City of Aiken and is a strong contributor to the economic vitality of Aiken County.

New Ellenton borders Savannah River Site and has two industrial sites near SRS. These industrial sites are located on US Highway 278. State Road 125 runs through Jackson, another town in the county that borders SRS. From Jackson on SR 125 traveling north towards North Augusta, there are three industrial sites near the Georgia border. Continuing north, just to the south of North Augusta there are several industrial sites at the intersection of SR 125 and State Road 421. North Augusta also has one regional mall and several shopping centers within the city, primarily located along US Highway 25 and State Road 230. In the vicinity of North Augusta there are two industrial sites located along Interstate 20.

Both I-20 and US Highway 78 are important in the development of industry and businesses that are located in Aiken County. There are no less than six industrial sites that run along I-20. But the majority of industrial sites around the City of Aiken are located at the intersection of US Highway 78 and State Road 302.

Along with industry, Aiken has the most shopping and regional malls in the region. The majority of the commercial centers are located south of Aiken along Whiskey Road. There are also several office sites that are located in the area south of Aiken. Downtown Aiken also has a few shopping centers as well as office sites. These are located primarily in the vicinity of the intersection of State Road 19, US Highway 78, and US Highway 1.

## **4.2 Government and Education**

Higher education institutions and government centers are in every county in the Lower Savannah COG region. Each county has at least one government center due to the courthouse and the county administration offices that are in each county. There are also several institutions of higher learning in the Lower Savannah region.

In addition to the county courthouses and county administration buildings located in each of the six counties in the Lower Savannah region, each incorporated municipality also has a town or city hall that houses municipal service departments such as the town clerk, water department and police department. These municipal offices range in size and staff in correlation with the population served.

There are three technical institutes in the Lower Savannah Region. Aiken Technical College is located in Aiken, SC on US Highway 1. In Bamberg County, Denmark Technical College is located in Denmark. Denmark Tech serves approximately 1,600 students. Located on US Highway 601, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College was opened in 1968.

Founded in 1897, Voorhees College has 16 programs of study and has 800 students enrolled. Voorhees is located in the Town of Denmark in Bamberg County. It is a private coed institution that is affiliated with the Episcopal Church.

Clafin College is a private coed institution that is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. It was founded in 1869 and is located in Orangeburg. Clafin has an average enrollment of 950, with 24 majors to choose from.

The University of South Carolina at Aiken has an average enrollment of 3,100 undergraduate students. Founded in 1961 in downtown Aiken, the school moved its campus to a more rural area of the city in 1972. The average class size for USC-Aiken is 19 students per class.

### **4.3 Tourism and Recreation**

There are five state parks in the region. Two of them are in Aiken County and the other three are in Orangeburg, Bamberg, and Barnwell counties respectively.

Orangeburg County's Santee State Park is located near Santee just off of State Road 6 near the Palmetto Trail. In Bamberg County, Rivers Bridge State Historic Site is located on State Road 641 east of Sycamore. Barnwell State Park is located just south of Blackville on State Road 3. Aiken County's state parks are located at opposite ends of the county. The Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site is located on US Highway 278 in Beech Island between Jackson and North Augusta. Aiken State Natural Area is located in between State Road 4 and US Highway 78 north of Windsor.

There are two tourist attractions that serve as routes in the region. Both the Palmetto Trail and the Heritage Corridor go through the Lower Savannah Region. The Palmetto Trail is exclusively in Orangeburg County. It follows I-95 south into Santee and from there goes southeast along State Road 6 through Vance and Eutawville. The Heritage Corridor has two separate paths through the region: the Nature Route and the Discovery Route. The Discovery Route comes down SR 191 to SR 19 in Aiken and then travels southeast through Montmorenci along US Highway 78. From there the route continues southeast through Williston, then Williston, Elko, Blackville, Denmark, and Bamberg until it goes northeast to Branchville and then southeast again out of the region. The Nature Route comes into the region in North Augusta. US Highway 278, the path's guide through the region, takes the trail southeast through the Savannah River site down to Barnwell where the trail joins State Road 64 through Olar and Ehrhardt and then exiting the region. Additionally, North Augusta is home to one of two welcome centers in the region, the other being in Allendale County on the Georgia border.

## **5 Transportation Infrastructure**

A safe and efficient transportation system is critical to the livelihood of a community. The transportation network facilitates the internal day-to-day functioning of the community and provides access to and from centers where goods and services are exported and imported. The three modes of transportation that exist in the Lower Savannah region include roads, airports and railroads. Water transportation through the ports system is also addressed as it relates to the potential shipping needs of prospective industrial development.

### **5.1 Existing Roadway System**

As in all predominately rural areas of the state, the Lower Savannah region's system of roads and highways provides the main mode of transportation.

### **5.1.1 Planned Roadway Improvements**

Roadway improvements in the Lower Savannah region and the other COG regions in South Carolina are prioritized and compiled into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP is a requirement of the 1998 *Transportation Equity Act* (TEA-21) and calls upon planning organizations (COGs and MPOs) to assist the state Department of Transportation in setting priority goals for roadway improvements. The STIP is a five-year plan that is updated every two years; currently the STIP covers the dates of October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2005. The funding for most of the high priority roadway improvement projects comes from Guideshare monies, which is a regional highway bonding program that utilizes anticipated available funding.

There are currently eight roadway improvements for the Lower Savannah region as identified in the STIP and ten roadway improvements for the South Carolina region of the Augusta MPO as identified in the ARTS TIP. Listed in Table 5.1 are the top priority roadway improvements for the Lower Savannah region.

Of the eight projects, three – I-95/I-26 interchange reconstruction, US Highway 301 upgrade in downtown Bamberg, and the Calhoun/Clarendon (or James E. Clyburn) Connector – are classified as “high priority” projects. Though inclusion in the STIP indicates that the projects are of a high priority and are supported at both the state and regional level, a “high priority” designation means these projects have been earmarked for special funding set aside by Congress through the TEA-21 legislation. At the state level, the High Priority/Demonstration Program administers these projects.

**Table 5.1. STIP Roadway Improvements - Lower Savannah Region**

Project	County	Description	Cost in		
			Length (Miles)	1000's (2001+)	Expected 5-year Activity
<i>Guideshare:</i>					
US 601	Orangeburg	Multi-laning from I-26 to US 176	6.13	\$8,113	CON
US 278	Barnwell	Selected improvements from SC 64 to SC 170	0.26	\$803	PE, ROW, CON
US 321	Orangeburg	Widen to 4 lanes from near S-1864 to US 178	5.51	\$17,186	PE, ROW, CON
US 78	Aiken	Widen to 4 lanes from S-507 to S-54	8.28	\$4,181	ROW, CON
US 601	Calhoun	Widen to 5 lanes from US 176 to SC 6	1.83	\$12,791	ROW, CON
<i>High Priority:</i>					
I-95/I-26 interchange	Orangeburg	Reconstruct interchange	0.00	\$5,340	CON
US 301	Bamberg	Upgrade in downtown Bamberg	0.40	\$2,010	CON
Calhoun/Clarendon Causeway	Calhoun, Clarendon, Sumter	Construct new causeway	6.00	\$4,083	CON

Source: *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program 2001-2005*, SCDOT, 2000

Notes: PE = preliminary engineering  
ROW = Right-of-way acquisition  
CON = construction

Working with SCDOT, the MPOs in the state propose and prioritize projects within the MPO area and create a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) contains ten projects proposed and prioritized by the Augusta MPO that affect the Lower Savannah Region. Details of the projects are reflected on Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2. ARTS TIP Roadway Improvements - Augusta MPO (Aiken County)**

Project	Description	Length (Miles)	Cost in	
			1000's (2001+)	Expected 5- year Activity
Bobby Jones Expressway	Construct a new expressway from I-20 to the Savannah River	7.00		Long term
Aiken area signal system	Plan, design, and construct signal system in downtown Aiken and SC 19 corridor	n/a		CON
SC 302 (Pine Log Rd)	Widen to 5 lanes from US 78 to SC 19; relocate intersection at US 78	2.50		CON
US 25 (Knox Ave)	Widen to 5 lanes from US 25 to SC 230	2.70	\$3,200	CON
SC 118	Widen to 5 lanes from SC 19 to new location; construct new section to SC 302/SC 4	3.77	\$7,200	CON
West Ave extension	Phase I of North Augusta Riverfront access improvement	n/a	\$1,435	PE, CON
Hitchcock Parkway	Widen to 5 lanes from US 1 to SC 19	n/a	\$3,200	PE, CON
East Buena Vista Ave	Study and begin construction of improved access between US 25 and the Savannah River	n/a	\$900	PE, ROW
US 78	Widen to 5 lanes from SC 302/SC 4 to S-507	2.50		Awaiting funds
SC 125 (Atomic Rd)	Widen to 5 lanes from Buena Vista Ave to Jefferson Davis Hwy (US 1/78)	2.30		Awaiting funds

Source: *Augusta Regional Transportation Study Transportation Improvement Program 2001-2005*

Notes: PE = preliminary engineering  
ROW = Right-of-way acquisition  
CON = construction

All but one of the current ARTS TIP projects in South Carolina are located within the cities of Aiken and North Augusta, although the ARTS region includes approximately one-third of Aiken County.

## **5.2 Regional Multi-Lane Roadway Accessibility**

Multi-lane accessibility in the region is served primarily by three interstates: I-20, I-26 and I-95. In the western area of the region, I-20 runs through Aiken County and provides access through seven interchanges. In the northeastern part of the region, I-26 provides access through 11 interchanges in Calhoun and Orangeburg Counties. I-95 in the eastern part of the region provides access through five interchanges.

With the exception of the three interstates, there are few highways in the Lower Savannah region with multi-lane accessibility. However, both the STIP and the South Carolina element of the ARTS TIP outline several projects that involve the widening of highways to accommodate high traffic volume (see Table 5.1, Table 5.2). Of the existing multi-lane highways in the region, all are US highways with the exception of portions of three state highways. Listed below are the sections of roadway that are currently either four-lanes or five-lanes (not including projects proposed or under construction as per the current STIP):

- US 25 from Edgefield County to Georgia border
- US 78 from Georgia border to SC 302
- SC 230 from Edgefield County to US 78
- SC 19 from US 78 to US 278
- US 1 from US 78 to I-20
- US 301 from Georgia border to I-95
- US 601 from US 301 to I-26
- US 21 in the City of Orangeburg

In considering the access routes of the multi-lane roadways listed above it should be noted that there are several important access routes that are excluded from the multi-lane roadway list. One apparent exclusion is US Highway 78, which is a major connector in the Lower Savannah region that runs through Aiken, Barnwell, Bamberg and Orangeburg counties. The highway has long been a regional priority, however, there are considerable sections of that roadway that provide only two-lane access. The roadway is an important freight connector between the Port of Charleston and Augusta, Georgia, and intersects with the CSX railway midway between Charleston and Augusta in the Town of Denmark. The frequency of truck traffic on the two-lane sections of this route has exacerbated deterioration to the roadway as well as causing decelerated traffic flow, particularly in those areas frequented by logging trucks.

The same observation can be made for sections of US Highway 278, which connects Augusta, Georgia with I-95 just north of Savannah, Georgia through

Aiken, Barnwell and Allendale counties in the Lower Savannah region. The highway is widely used to move freight and, similar to US Highway 78, sees a large volume of logging truck traffic.

Another important multi-lane route in the region is US Highway 321, which runs north-south and parallels the CSX railway line. This highway is currently undergoing widening between the towns of North and Neeses in Orangeburg County under the SCDOT Guideshare program to accommodate the traffic volume. US Highway 321 provides access to Columbia to the north and Savannah to the south, which results in a large volume of traffic within the region.

### **5.3 Regional Traffic Volumes**

Though the Lower Savannah region is primarily rural, there are several areas that have high annual average daily traffic counts. The following observations were made using the AADT counts from 1994 and 1999 provided by SCDOT.

There are several areas of high traffic in Aiken County. In part due to the fact that a major interstate runs through the county, Aiken County has higher traffic counts than all of the other counties in the Lower Savannah region. I-20 runs from the Georgia border with Aiken County to the border with Lexington County. It is the longest stretch of high traffic not only in Aiken County, but also in the Lower Savannah region. Starting at the Georgia line and moving northeast towards Saluda County, US Highway 1 has high traffic in six different areas along its path through Aiken County. All of those six areas come between the Georgia border and the City of Aiken. US Highway 25 runs for only a short distance in Aiken County but that area is dense, with seven high traffic locations between the Georgia border and Aiken's border with Edgefield County. On average, US Highway 25 is slightly less dense than US Highway 1, however the high traffic between the road's intersection with State Road 230 and Business US Highway 25 is the highest along its path. State Road 19 runs through much of the City of Aiken and also has high traffic density. This roadway is slightly less dense than US Highway 25, however its traffic is significant and it is an area of high congestion in the Aiken community.

Almost all of Allendale County's high traffic occurs on US Highway 278. The road has steady traffic from the northern border of the Town of Allendale to south of the town and in the downtown area. Beyond the traffic in the Town of Allendale, Allendale County does not have any significant areas of high traffic.

In Bamberg County, US Highway 78 is the roadway with the highest traffic counts. From the Barnwell County line to the City of Bamberg, there are six heavy traffic areas along US Highway 78. The intersection of US Highway 301 and US Highway 78 is the busiest in the county. US Highway 301 is well traveled and has five areas of high traffic counts in the county. Additionally, US Highway 321 has

three heavy traffic points in the county, all of which are located near the City of Denmark.

Like Bamberg County, the majority of Barnwell County's high traffic is along US Highway 78. There are five high traffic areas along US Highway 78, making it the densest road in the county. The intersection with the highest traffic counts, however, is located in Barnwell. The intersection of US Highway 278 and State Road 64 is the highest traffic area in Barnwell County, with traffic counts higher than every other intersection in the county. The southern section of the City of Barnwell is also heavy in traffic due to the US Highway 278/SR 3 road that runs south towards Kline.

Calhoun County does not have the same amount of congestive traffic as Aiken or Orangeburg County, but it does have three problem areas. One area with high traffic is in the south part of the county along US Highway 601. This area has high levels of traffic primarily because it runs from Orangeburg north to St. Matthews. It is the most congested section of south Calhoun County. The Town of St Matthews also has high traffic in several areas. Within the city limits State Road 6 is the main traffic congestion area. SR 6 has four heavy traffic areas along its path through downtown St. Matthews. Finally, the most congested area of Calhoun County is along I-26. One area along I-26 that is heavy with congestion is located near the Orangeburg County border in southern Calhoun County. Interstate 26 skews the traffic average for Calhoun County, tripling any other area of the county's high traffic.

In Orangeburg County, the highest traffic counts are in east Orangeburg along US Highway 21. This highway splits in Orangeburg and forms an eastern perimeter around the city. This area is the densest in the county. Starting at the southern tip of the City of Orangeburg and moving north and to the east, US Highway 21 is responsible for 11 high traffic areas alone in Orangeburg County. Interstates play a key role in the high traffic statistics in Orangeburg County as well. Both I-95 and I-26 travel through Orangeburg County. Both of these interstates have several high traffic areas. I-26, which runs from the border of Calhoun County to Dorchester County, has high traffic areas along its route. Starting from the northern most point and spreading out all the way to the southern most point of the interstate in the county, I-26 has six high traffic areas. I-95, which runs from the border of Clarendon County to Dorchester County, has high traffic in several areas as well. Starting just north of Santee and traveling south to below I-95's intersection with I-26, there are five different high traffic areas along the interstate.

#### **5.4 Future Traffic Forecasts**

Based on the above observations and through analysis of the roadways that are currently nearing or over capacity in traffic density (as provided by SCDOT), forecasts can be made of the roadways that will be over capacity in the coming years. Of the 52 roadways that had vehicle traffic exceed capacity in the Lower

Savannah region in 1999, Orangeburg County contains an overwhelming majority, with 37 over capacity roads. Aiken and Barnwell counties each had seven roads that exceeded capacity; Bamberg and Calhoun counties each had one. There were no over capacity roads in Allendale County in 1999.

Based on a 5-year trend analysis, the roadways reflected on Table 5.3 are expected to need improvements by 2011 to alleviate the problems caused by exceeded capacity. This method of projection merely extrapolates from the current trends and can be affected by changes in development.

**Table 5.3. 2011 Estimated Over Capacity Roads**

County	Route	Description
Aiken	SC 19	SC 118 to I-20
Aiken	S-144	S-105 to S-33
Orangeburg	US 21	US 601 to S-94
Orangeburg	US 21	S-52/S-31/S-929 Con.
Orangeburg	US 21	S-106 to US 21/178/601
Orangeburg	US 178	S-61 to US 178 BUS.
Orangeburg	US 178	US 178 BUS. to S-811
Orangeburg	US 178	SC 33 to US 301/601
Orangeburg	SC 4	S-686 to US 301
Orangeburg	SC 6	US 15/301/SC 6 Con.
Orangeburg	S-49	S-90 to S-1374
Orangeburg	S-94	S-1772 to US 601
Orangeburg	S-94	S-194 to S-1772
Orangeburg	S-94	US 21 BP to S-194

Source: SCDOT, 2001

As evident on the above table, Orangeburg County contains the majority of roads that are predicted to be exceeding capacity in 2011. The routes listed above are estimated to be at a level of service (LOS) rating of E or F in 2011, meaning they are predicted to become very congested and should be priority improvements in the region.

## 5.5 Transit

Mass transit providers in the Lower Savannah Council of Governments region are available to provide citizens with several transportation related services. Transportation for the elderly and disabled population as well as job access routes are made available in the region through these mass transit providers.

Lower Savannah COG is the Regional Transit Management Authority (RTMA) for the Lower Savannah region. The RTMA consists of three committees. The Technical Advisory Committee, which is made up of public and private representatives, is responsible for analyzing issues, developing consensus, and

recommending solutions. The Governing Body, whose members include the Board of Directors of Lower Savannah Council of Government, manages services, technical assistance and administrative duties associated with the RTMA. The Policy Committee, which consists of representatives from each County government and the Executive Directors of the lead transportation agencies, presents policy and administrative recommendations to the Governing Body. The lead agencies include Aiken County Transit for Aiken and Edgefield (advisory function) Counties, Generations Unlimited for Barnwell, Bamberg and Allendale Counties, and Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority for Orangeburg and Calhoun Counties.

The Aiken Area Council on Aging provides service to the Aiken County rural area. Known in the county as the Best Friend Express, the Aiken Area Council on Aging's transit service provides transit options for elderly and handicapped citizens as well as simple transit routes in the City of Aiken as well as in the rural areas of Aiken County. The percent urbanized and non-urbanized revenue miles are 53% urban to 47% non-urban. At this time, the Best Friend Express is not designated to serve an area that will be impacted by the proposed Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor.

Generations Unlimited, a transit provider in Barnwell County, serves Williston, Barnwell, Blackwell, and other parts of Barnwell County. The base of the transit is in Barnwell, however, each day there are no less than two buses in Blackwell and Williston for citizens. The organization recently received a Job Access grant, which is a recently funded DOT and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) initiative that provides assistance in the development of new or expanded transportation services to connect welfare recipients and other low income persons to jobs. Generations Unlimited is not currently in an area where the proposed Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor will be serving. All of Generations Unlimited's revenue miles are as a result of non-urbanized transit.

Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA) has been providing service in Orangeburg County. Santee Wateree officially serves Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, and Sumter counties. SWRTA's percent of urbanized revenue miles is 25.6% and its percent of non-urbanized revenue miles is 74.4%. Lower Savannah COG is considering recommending Santee Wateree as the transit provider for Orangeburg County.

Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) is the provider of transit services for Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties. However, LRTA also provides transit for parts of Allendale County. The majority of the service that LRTA provides to Allendale County is as a result of work for citizens of Allendale in the Hilton Head Island area. Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority's transit is 100% non-urbanized. Lower Savannah COG is considering recommending Lowcountry Regional Transit Authority as the transit provider for Allendale County.

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department assists persons with disabilities by providing transportation to work. Like other public transit providers, Vocational Rehabilitation primarily operates a demand response system. However, the organization also provides highly individualized accommodations for persons with disabilities.

In addition to the public transit systems, there are more than 25 private transit providers in Lower Savannah's region. These providers, which operate demand response systems, provide transit alternatives for the six-county region.

## **5.6 Airports**

There are no major commercial airports in the Lower Savannah region, however, commercial air service is available at two major airports just outside the region: the Columbia Metropolitan Airport adjacent to I-26 in Columbia, located north of the region, and Bush Field in Augusta, Georgia located just southwest of the Lower Savannah region across the Savannah River. Commercial air service is also available at the Charleston International Airport near I-26, which lies east of the region. Additionally, the Savannah International Airport south of the region is adjacent to Interstate 95.

Each of the Lower Savannah counties, with the exception of Calhoun County, contains a municipal or county general aviation airport. The Aiken Municipal Airport is by far the busiest airport in the region, with total operations of 65,000 for 1999. The airport is located only one mile from I-20, just north of the City of Aiken on US Highway 1. Airport facilities include a 5,700 foot lighted runway, tie-down and hanger storage, and 100LL-A jet fuel. Services also include minor airframe repairs, aircraft rental, instruction and aerial survey.

Allendale County operates the Allendale County Airport, a general aviation facility located off of US Highway 278 between Allendale and Fairfax. The nearest interstate is I-95, located approximately 35 miles east of the airport. In 1999 the Allendale County Airport had operations of 12,150. Facilities include a medium intensity lighted runway of 4,993 feet, tie-down and hangar storage, 100LL-A jet fuel, instruction, and aerial survey.

In Bamberg County, the Bamberg County Airport is the least active general aviation airport in the Lower Savannah Region, with operations of 4,500 in 1999. The airport is located east of the City of Bamberg, on US Highway 78, with the nearest interstate being I-26 approximately 24 miles west of the airport. The airport offers a 3,600 foot medium intensity lighted runway, tie-down and hangar storage, 100LL-A jet fuel, and major airframe repairs.

The Barnwell County Airport is a general aviation facility located just on the outskirts of the City of Barnwell on Highway 278, approximately 50 miles east of I-20 and 50 miles west of I-95. The airport provides two operable runways with a maximum runway length of 5,255 feet and offers tie-down and hanger storage

and 100LL-A jet fuel. Plans to expand the maximum runway length to 6,000 feet to meet FAA regulations are currently underway. In 1999 the total operations for the airport were 16,300.

Servicing Orangeburg and Calhoun counties, the Orangeburg Municipal Airport is a general aviation facility located just south of the City of Orangeburg on US Highway 178, approximately ten miles west of I-26. The airport is currently undergoing a major expansion program that includes the construction of a 5,400 foot paved and lighted runway perpendicular to the existing 4,500 foot runway. In 1999, the total operations of the Orangeburg Municipal Airport were 22,420, making it the second busiest air facility in the Lower Savannah region. Available services include tie-down and hangar storage, 100LL-A jet fuel, major airframe repairs, aircraft rental, instruction, and aerial survey.

## **5.7 Rail**

As is the case throughout most rural portions of the United States, rail passenger service is no longer available in most of the region. Within the region, service is provided only by an Amtrak station in the Town of Denmark along the north-south CSX line. CSX and Norfolk Southern lines provide access to freight service in the Lower Savannah area.

There are three CSX lines that service the Lower Savannah region. A north-south line that parallels US Highway 321 connects Columbia and Savannah and provides the only rail passenger service in the region, via an Amtrak station in the Town of Denmark. A north-east CSX line runs from Cope, through Orangeburg in Orangeburg County, then through Cameron and Lone Star in Calhoun County, connecting with an east-west CSX line in Sumter. Connecting with this line between Cameron and Lone Star is an east-west line that runs through Ellore, Santee, and Vance in Orangeburg County, changing course in Eutawville and continuing north-south through Holly Hill to meet a Norfolk Southern line connecting Columbia and Charleston. A CSX line that runs in an east-west direction through Aiken, Allendale and Barnwell counties provides access to rail freight service between Augusta and Port Royal. This line runs through the Savannah River Site (SRS) and services the Site with a spur. Plans to provide a new rail spur from this line to the new South Carolina Advanced Technology Site near the Town of Snelling in Barnwell County are currently underway. This will provide direct access to freight service for the growing industrial area.

Also servicing the Lower Savannah region are two Norfolk Southern lines. A Norfolk Southern line running in a north-east direction out of Orangeburg passes through St. Matthews and Fort Motte, and then turns in a north-west direction to Columbia. This line changes to an east-west direction in Branchville and continues to Charleston. The other Norfolk Southern line runs from Augusta north to Columbia. There are three spurs off this line in Aiken County that provide freight service to the City of Aiken and the airport and industrial site area on US Highway 1. The section of these lines between Branchville and Charleston

was once part of the “Best Friend” train, which was the first regularly scheduled steam train that began operations in 1831, connecting Charleston to Hamburg (now North Augusta). Two rails-trails projects were constructed on abandoned sections of this route; more detail on these can be found in Section 1.3.6.

The Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR) is a four-state passenger rail service proposal that will have great impact on the Lower Savannah region. An extension of Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor, the SEHSR will run from Macon, Atlanta, Greenville, Spartanburg, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Raleigh to Richmond and Washington, DC. The SEHSR will also run from Jacksonville, Savannah, and Columbia to Raleigh and all points north. As currently proposed, the corridor will be constructed through the center of the Lower Savannah region, directly affecting Orangeburg, Bamberg and Allendale counties.

## **5.8 Ports**

The two high traffic volume commercial seaports accessible to the Lower Savannah region are the Port of Charleston, approximately 85 highway miles from the center of the region, and the Port of Savannah, approximately 90 highway miles from the center of the region. The Port of Charleston is the busier of the two ports, moving 1,567,593 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) during FY 2000. In comparison, the Port of Savannah handled 845,408 TEUs during FY 2000. Both ports provide warehousing and container transfer facilities in addition to many other intermodal services.

## **5.9 Bicycle and Pedestrian**

Trail corridors such as bicycle and pedestrian routes can serve multiple purposes in a community: as an outlet for recreational activity, a tool for natural resource and historic preservation, and as a means of transit. Trail corridors can provide links to isolated sites in a community, creating green spaces in urban areas and providing an incentive for urban revitalization.

The Lower Savannah region has two rails-trails corridors, both in Aiken County: the Cathedral Aisle Trail in Aiken and the North Augusta Greenway, named after former Mayor Thomas Greene. The Cathedral Aisle Trail has historic importance in that it was the first public rail-trail in the country, opened in 1939 on the abandoned “Best Friend” line, which was the country’s first regularly scheduled steam train line that began operating between Charleston and Hamburg (now North Augusta) in 1831. Though much of the line has now been abandoned, Norfolk Southern still operates the line between Branchville in Orangeburg County to Charleston. Because of its location in the City of Aiken, the Cathedral Aisle Trail is used by equestrians and horse-driven carriages as well as walkers and hikers. The three-mile trail is linked to a 65-mile network throughout Hitchcock Woods, which is a 2,000-acre forested preserve near downtown Aiken. As an historic urban site, Hitchcock Woods and its trails provide for ample recreational green space in the city, and though there are no bicycles or

motorized vehicles allowed in the woods, the trails are frequented by equestrian traffic.

The North Augusta Greenway was also constructed on the Charleston-Hamburg line. The Greenway is being built in phases, with 5.3 miles out of a total eight-mile trail having been recently constructed. The first phase was completed in 1995, and in the most recent phase a pedestrian bridge was constructed above SC Highway 230. Centrally located to the trail is Riverview Park, which offers many recreational amenities and is the destination for many Greenway travelers. A large part of the Greenway project has been funded with ISTEAs (now TEA 21) Transportation Enhancement funding. The city's goal is to have the Greenway circle North Augusta and be used by commuters as well as for recreational and nature-based outings.

In addition to the rail-trail corridors, the region has other bicycle and pedestrian routes. The five state parks in the Lower Savannah region, two of which are historic sites, all provide recreational trails. Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site and Aiken State Natural Area are located in Aiken County. Barnwell State Park is located in Barnwell County, and Rivers Bridge State Historic Site is located in Bamberg County. Santee State Park is located in Orangeburg County. Also in Orangeburg County is Edisto Memorial Gardens, home to the Horne Wetlands Site, which offers a 2,600-foot boardwalk through a Tupelo/Cypress wetland area near the Edisto River.

### **5.10 Intermodal Facilities**

The intermodal sites are clustered in the urbanized areas and along major access routes, particularly in and around the cities of Aiken and Orangeburg. The majority of trucking companies in the region are located near interstates or along major arteries of the National Highway System. Intermodal facilities are an integral part of this transportation plan and efficient intermodal connectivity is a high priority for the region.

## **6 Regional Transportation Issues**

### **6.1 Significant Environmental Features**

Within the region, rivers, lakes and streams cover nearly 57 square miles. A large percentage of the surface water in comes from the Santee-Cooper lakes and Lake Marion located on the northern borders of Orangeburg and Calhoun counties. Rivers that flow through the region include the Edisto River (including the North and South Forks), the Savannah River, the Salkehatchie River and Little Salkehatchie River (which join to form the Combahee River), and the Congaree and Santee rivers. From these rivers stem many creeks. The river basins provide excellent riparian, or stream edge habitats which consist of mostly forested wetlands. These wetlands provide support for wildlife habitats and improve the water quality in the county. The region also contains many "Carolina Bays," a

common name for unique circular depressions thought to be Aeolian features dating to the late glacial period, and which are scattered about the state.

The majority of the riparian ecosystem in the region remains in natural cover, meaning a relatively small percent of stream edge habitat has been converted to other land uses. This stabilizes the stream hydrology related to land use, but also improves water quality of the rivers and associated streams by reducing sediment, nutrients and other contaminants.

Native animals in the Lower Savannah region include white-tailed deer, birds of prey, songbirds and wild turkey. According to the South Carolina Heritage Trust, there are 7 federally threatened or endangered native plant and animal species in the region. Federally threatened or endangered species in the region include relect trillium, harperella, smooth coneflower, and Canby's dropwort. Animal species that are federally threatened or endangered in the region include the red-cockaded woodpecker, the bald eagle and the shortnose sturgeon. Additionally, there are many other plant and animal species that the Heritage Trust considers threatened or endangered in South Carolina.

## **6.2 Historic Sites**

The historic sites in the Lower Savannah region include but are not limited to buildings, sites and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. With 36 sites (including eight historic districts), Orangeburg County has the most National Register sites in the region. Aiken County has 32 National Register sites, including six historic districts. Elsewhere in the region, Calhoun County has 15 sites on the National Register, Allendale County has 12, Bamberg County has nine and Barnwell County has five. Scattered through the region are sites of historical importance such as antebellum houses, downtown commercial districts, courthouses, battle sites and railroad depots. Archeological sites that have important pre-historic value are also located throughout the region, particularly along the riverbeds.

Inclusion or eligibility for inclusion in the National Register provides historic sites a level of protection from federally funded projects, to include DOT projects. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 stipulates that agencies administering federally assisted projects must take into account the effects of the project on historic properties. In South Carolina, the State Historic Preservation Office (housed within the Department of Archives and History) determines eligibility and provides technical assistance to agencies undergoing the Section 106 process.

## **6.3 Safety**

The issue of safety in terms of transportation comprises an extensive number of characteristics including roadway conditions, high volume traffic areas, accident

location and frequency, and evacuation routes. Priority current and future roadway improvements can make a significant impact on safety of the roadways in the region. These priority improvements are included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and discussed in Section 5, and therefore will not be discussed in this section.

### **6.3.1 High Collision Locations**

The majority of accidents in the region occur in the urbanized areas, particularly in the cities of North Augusta and Orangeburg, with the exception of US Highway 78 between Williston and Bamberg in Barnwell and Bamberg counties and along US Highway 176 in Calhoun County. At first glance, there appears to be an inconsistency between the priority Guideshare projects and the high accident locations along US Highway 78 – the improvements to the highway as per the current STIP are located in the only stretch of the highway that is not marked with a high accident rate (between the community of Montmorenci and the Town of Williston). However, there is a great deal of freight and commuter traffic along this stretch of highway that causes congestion and roadway surface damage. US Highway 278 in Allendale County also sees a high rate of accidents, primarily in the towns of Allendale and Fairfax, which are in the more populated areas of the county.

The South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) tracks motor vehicle traffic collisions and categorizes them by type of unit, jurisdiction and route category. According to the data collected, Aiken County had the greatest number of collisions in 1999 (3,005), followed by Orangeburg County (2,448). The remaining counties in the region – Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Calhoun – each had fewer than 400 traffic collisions in 1999.<sup>1</sup> The SCDPS also ranks counties in total collisions, including total number of fatalities and injuries. In the Lower Savannah region, Aiken County is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the state for total collisions, followed by Orangeburg County ranked 13<sup>th</sup>, Barnwell County 41<sup>st</sup>, Calhoun County 43<sup>rd</sup>, Bamberg County 44<sup>th</sup>, and Allendale County 45<sup>th</sup>.

According to the SCDPS, in 1999 the majority of motor vehicle traffic collisions in the Lower Savannah region occurred on US Primary routes. The routes with the second highest amount of collisions were Secondary routes, and SC Primary routes had the third highest amount of collisions. Because only three of the six counties in the Lower Savannah region have interstates that run through them, interstate collisions were minimal in the region, as were those that took place on county roads. These ratios are consistent with those of the state.

Of the ten highest collision intersections in the region in 1999, five were in Orangeburg County and five were in Aiken County. Listed below in Table 6.1 are the ten highest collision intersections in the Lower Savannah region.

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<sup>1</sup> *South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book 1999*, SCDPS, 2000

**Table 6.1. Ten Highest Collision Intersections**

Intersection	County	Number of Collisions
US 21 and S-94	Orangeburg	17
US 21 and US 601	Orangeburg	16
US 25 and S-45	Aiken	10
US 301 and S-211	Orangeburg	10
SC 302 and S-440	Aiken	10
SC 19 and SC 302	Aiken	9
US 25 and S-355	Aiken	9
SC 70 and S-33	Orangeburg	9
US 301 and S-224	Orangeburg	8
US 1 and S-1004	Aiken	8

Source: SCDPS, 2000

As evident on the above table, of the ten highest collision intersections in 1999, two are located on US Highway 21 in Orangeburg County, two on US Highway 301 in Orangeburg County, and two are located on US Highway 25 in Aiken County.

### 6.3.2 Evacuation Routes

The South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) has developed the South Carolina Emergency Operations Plan (SCEOP) "...for use by state government officials to ensure mitigation and preparedness, appropriate response and timely recovery from hazards that may affect the State of South Carolina."<sup>2</sup> Because the Savannah River Site, a federal nuclear facility, is located in the Lower Savannah region, an especially significant element of this plan for the region is "Annex 25: Specific Impact Hazards" which defines emergency response procedures for hazard threats, to include evacuation as a result of nuclear power plant accidents. The SCEMD works with a number of state agencies, including SCDOT, to call on for assistance in the case of an evacuation.

In preparation for more probable circumstances than hazard evacuation – hurricane evacuation – the SCEMD has specified evacuation routes for coastal evacuation zones in its South Carolina Hurricane Plan. In the Lower Savannah region, each of the six counties contains at least one evacuation route, and the cities of Aiken and North Augusta in Aiken County are end points for several of the coastal evacuation routes. Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg and Barnwell counties lie within the Southern Coastal Conglomerate region, while Calhoun and Orangeburg counties lie within the Central Coastal Conglomerate region. Proper response procedures and traffic flow considerations for the Conglomerate regions are outlined in the Basic Plan of the South Carolina Hurricane Plan. The SC

<sup>2</sup> "South Carolina Emergency Operations Plan," SCEPD, March 2001, preface

Hurricane Plan procedures function in tandem with the SCEOP, utilizing several state agencies, including SCDOT, in emergency response efforts.

## **Regional Transportation Recommendations**

- 1.** Continue to work with SCDOT in corridor analysis – identifying deficiencies, barriers and potential solutions to facilitate development of inter- and intra-regional improved multilane access to the interstate highway system
- 2.** Support community participation and encourage involvement of local government and citizens in transportation policy & recommendations and project priority ranking.
- 3.** Assist local governments with transportation and land use planning.
- 4.** Coordinate transit efforts through the Lower Savannah RTMA, including the implementation of a multi-year action plan and detailing the responsibilities of participating entities.
- 5.** Support efforts of growth management and planning of significant economic development corridors (Interstates 20, 26, 95 and Highways 78, 278, 64, 321).
- 6.** Support and assist in development of freight mobility projects such as intermodal transfer stations; evaluate existing intermodal facilities and distribution centers to determine efficient ways to accommodate freight and delivery of goods.
- 7.** Support and develop safety related projects such as roadway improvement for high accident locations and construction of sidewalks and bicycle paths on congested corridors.
- 8.** Support land use, zoning, design and road standards, and development conditions that improve safety, transit access and nonmotorized travel.
- 9.** Maintain an updated GIS database of transportation facilities, transportation trends and forecasts, priority improvements, demographics and economic development indicators.
- 10.** Work with SCDOT and Augusta MPO to develop a non-attainment area program consistent with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and the state's air quality plans. As currently monitored, Aiken and Barnwell counties in the Lower Savannah region would have non-attainment status under NAAQS and the Clean Air Act.



## *Appendix A – Regional Map*

# Lower Savannah Region

## Long Range Priorities

- Municipalities
- Long Range Priorities
- Current STIP Projects
- Existing Multi-Lane Road
- SC Highways
- US Highways
- Interstates
- County Boundary
- Savannah River Site Boundary



Prepared by the  
Lower Savannah COG GIS  
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### General Disclaimer

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