

DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA TRUCK MITIGATION STUDY

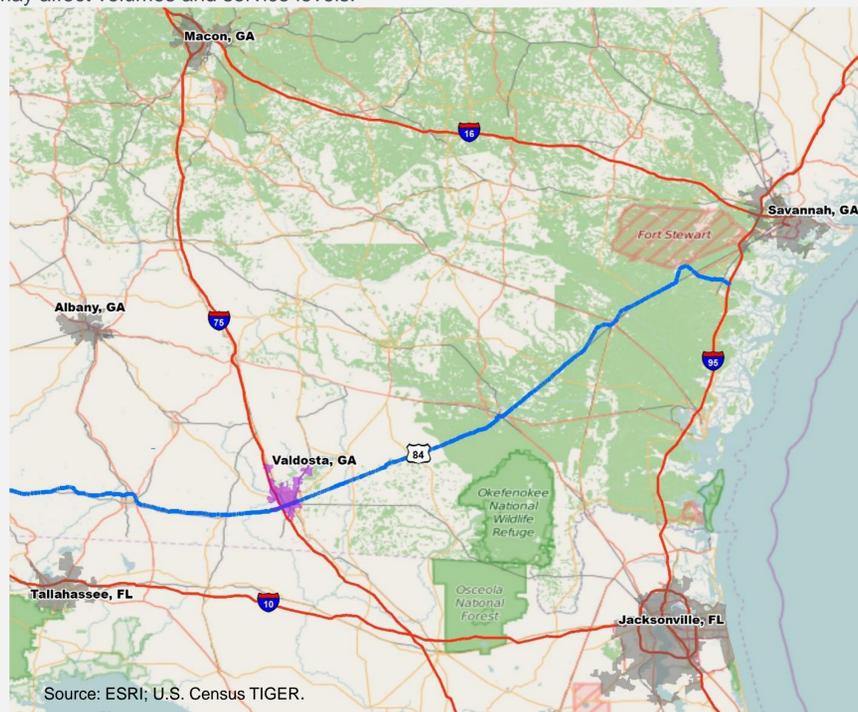
OVERVIEW

While there currently is much attention directed at freight planning for states and large cities, less focus has been placed on suburban, exurban, and rural areas. Often, these communities struggle with mobility and quality of life issues related to trucks in particular. These issues may be overlooked in state and regional planning, which tend to focus on broader mobility and economic challenges.

This project takes place in Valdosta, a community of about 50,000 people in south Georgia. The goal is to alleviate the localized impacts of heavy-truck movements through downtown on U.S. 84, a critical rural freight corridor with connectivity to the Port of Savannah. The study develops solutions to mitigate localized truck traffic impacts, including truck bypass alternatives. The methodological approach combines freight data from various national and state sources, locally collected data, and feedback from stakeholders to better understand truck operations in downtown. The benefit of this approach is that it preserves regional and state-level interests in maintaining performance on the freight corridor while balancing the community's need to relieve the burden of heavy trucks through downtown.

APPROACH

- Reach out to stakeholders to understand the primary needs and issues from their perspectives.
- Characterize existing conditions and performance using truck counts, crash data, truck travel times from the National Performance Research Data Set (NPMRDS), and other sources.
- Determine how trucks currently utilize U.S. 84 by conducting a truck following study.
- Predict future freight growth in the U.S. 84 corridor and how the different bypass alternatives may affect volumes and service levels.



STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

- Interviewed key public- and private-sector stakeholders to understand issues related to downtown truck movements and potential alternatives for mitigating this traffic.

Truck speeds too high Vibrations Sidewalks in poor condition Noise
 Passenger and pedestrian conflicts Lack of good alternative routes

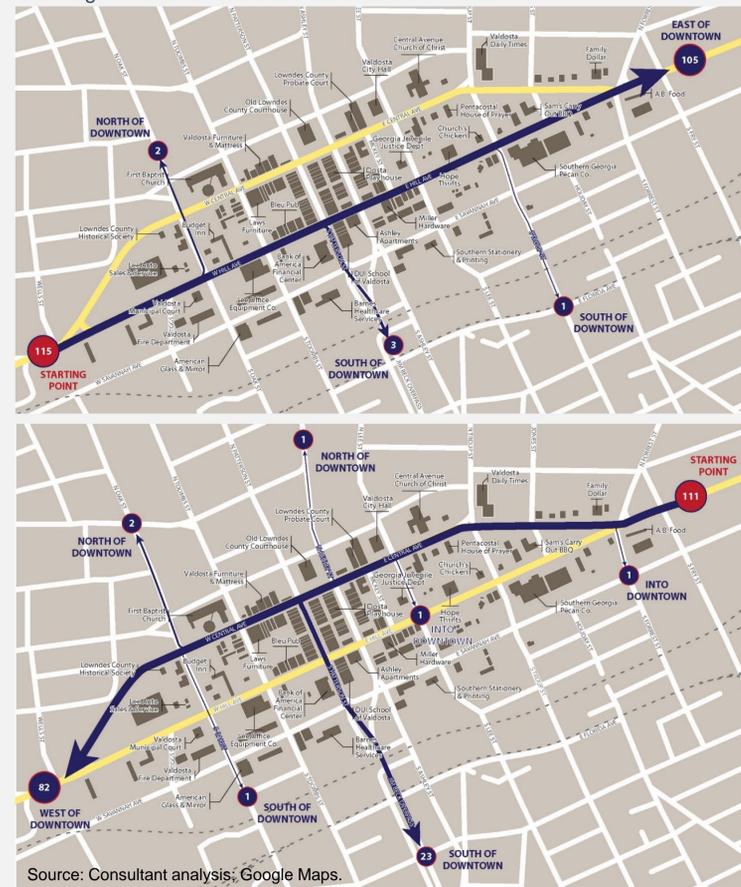
SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Truck traffic through downtown is very frequent, about one truck per minute. This results in a challenging environment for pedestrians, passenger vehicles, and downtown businesses.
- Despite heavy pedestrian and passenger vehicle traffic, truck mobility in the corridor is relatively high. Based on the NPMRDS analysis, average truck speeds are close to posted speed limits.

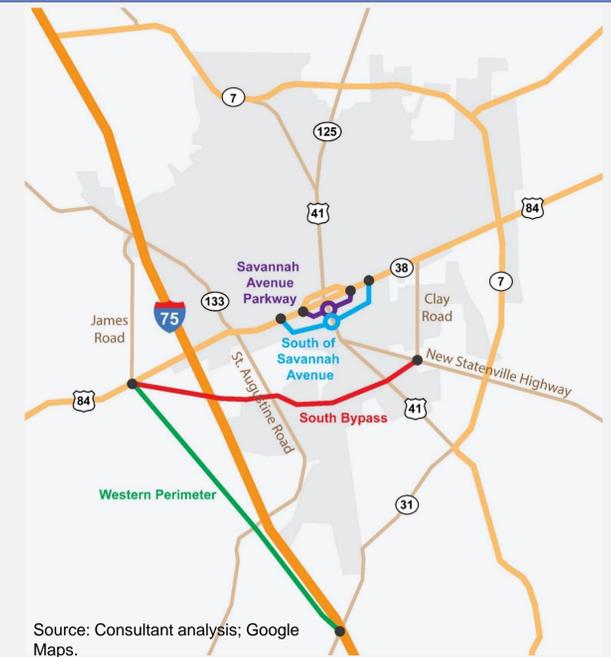


TRUCK FOLLOWING

- The goal of the truck following component of the study was to estimate the percentage of through trucks and to understand the destinations of local trucks. Nearly 300 trucks were followed over the course of six days.
- Most trucks traveled through downtown without stopping – over 90 percent. Of the trucks that stopped within the region, most were destined for industries east and south of downtown.
- The key insight is that most motor carriers do not serve downtown businesses, thus a bypass may be an effective solution. Furthermore, any bypass alternative should facilitate travel to and from the freight-intensive land uses south and east of downtown.



BYPASS ALTERNATIVES



MODEL RESULTS

- The region's travel demand model was used to predict the effect of the bypass alternatives on truck traffic through downtown. The results indicated that all of the alternatives would alleviate truck traffic to some extent by the forecast year – 2040.
 - **Savannah Avenue Parkway (All Vehicles)** – Enhances connectivity on Savannah Avenue to allow for east-west through movements.
 - **Savannah Avenue Parkway (Trucks Only)** – The same roadway enhancements as the All Vehicles sub-alternative, but is open only to truck traffic.
 - **Savannah Avenue Parkway (4 Lanes)** – Expands Savannah Avenue to four through lanes in addition to enhancing connectivity for east-west through traffic.
 - **South of Savannah Avenue** – Creates a new east-west roadway near existing rail right-of-way.
 - **South Bypass** – Creates a new east-west roadway that links industrial clusters east and southwest of downtown. This alternative would become the new route for U.S. 84 thereby allowing the local government to restrict truck traffic in downtown.

Location	Daily Truck Volumes (2010)	2040 Do-Nothing	2040 Savannah Avenue Parkway (All Vehicles)	2040 Savannah Avenue Parkway (Trucks Only)	2040 Savannah Avenue Parkway (4 Lanes)	2040 South of Savannah Avenue	2040 South Bypass
West Central Ave.	1,200	27%	-11%	-68%	-15%	-33%	-100%
East Central Ave.	790	57%	11%	-54%	-22%	-20%	-100%
West Hill Ave.	1,270	14%	-29%	-85%	-62%	-56%	-100%
East Hill Ave.	600	50%	2%	-93%	-66%	-65%	-100%
South Patterson St.	1,170	-7%	-33%	-45%	-40%	-21%	-16%
South Ashley St.	940	3%	-11%	-24%	-26%	-14%	67%
West Savannah Ave.	200	55%	850%	2,670%	1,310%	-80%	220%
East Savannah Ave.	600	32%	282%	823%	450%	-18%	228%

Source: Consultant analysis.

NEXT STEPS

- Conduct additional public meetings to discuss the findings with the community.
- Select a preferred alternative based on the model results and other factors including: cost, safety, and impacts to environmental justice areas, among others.