

# 2018 Challenges Ahead

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**ATL**

## REGIONAL ISSUE

# Accommodating Increasing Freight Traffic

## BACKGROUND

Because of its size and its position as a crossroads for highway, rail, air, and ocean-going goods, the Atlanta region is the Southeast's most important freight hub. And that reputation will certainly continue in the future.

Metro Atlanta's total freight volume is projected to grow 76% from 2013 to 2040, according to federal projections, driven by rising global trade, population growth, and the return of manufacturing and suppliers to the U.S. The Port of Savannah moved a record number of freight containers in 2017, many of which traveled to metro Atlanta.

If this growing cargo volume impedes goods movement, experts say, the region could face economic difficulties and lose jobs. Almost one third of the area's employment depends on reliable freight shipments. By 2040, that number is expected to grow by more than 400,000 jobs, to 40% of all new employment.

To deal with looming freight traffic issues, metro Atlanta and Georgia must make significant investments in new infrastructure and boost the efficiency of existing facilities. The Georgia Ports Authority is spearheading efforts to improve rail links and create inland ports, while the Georgia Department of Transportation is planning truck-only lanes along I-75 north of Macon.

But freight traffic already strains the region's road network, as most of the region's busiest trucking corridors are the region's most congested and have the greatest need for safety improvements.

## Freight Volume on the Rise

Freight with an origin or destination in metro Atlanta (air, train, and truck) totaled 151 million tons and \$313 billion of value in 2013. The tonnage is estimated to grow by 76% by 2040. These numbers do not account for freight passing through the region, an additional volume consideration in planning for the future.



## REGIONAL PLAYERS

Georgia Department of Transportation  
CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads  
Georgia Ports Authority  
Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport  
City and county governments  
UPS, Home Depot, and many other private companies  
Georgia Department of Economic Development

## INSIGHTS & INNOVATION

With more than 3,900 logistics providers in Georgia, the movement of goods within and through metro Atlanta is critical to the region's economic competitiveness.

Many recommended projects from ARC's freight plan are already in the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), or short-term work program, including \$1.8 billion programmed for projects that will begin construction by 2021.

Other long-range projects include new interchanges, merging lanes on highways, and managed Express Lanes for commuters that will free up capacity on general purpose lanes. The Georgia Ports Authority is continuing with construction of the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP), while Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is constructing new air cargo facilities to move freight more quickly and expand their operations.

Moving freight more efficiently through transportation technology improvements and private sector supply chain advancements is also key to managing freight growth.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION/ COLLABORATION

ARC Freight Cluster Plans  
Atlanta Region's Plan



Atlanta Regional Commission