

PRELIMINARY NEED AND PURPOSE

**STP-0000-00(520), (519), (475), & (473), P.I. Nos. 000520, 000519,
000475, & 000473**

COLQUITT, WORTH, & DOUGHERTY COUNTIES

SR 133 IMPROVEMENTS FROM MOULTRIE TO ALBANY

As part of the Governor's Road Improvement Program, or "GRIP," the primary purpose of the proposed improvements to SR 133 from Moultrie to Albany is to encourage economic development. However, the project also addresses other important needs along the corridor, particularly those concerning improved access and safety along SR 133, which is a designated truck access route. Projects STP-0000-00(520) (519) (475) & (473) are GRIP projects that will widen approximately 32.0 miles of the SR 133 corridor from Moultrie to Albany to four lanes. The proposed projects are four in a series of projects programmed to widen SR 133 through Georgia as mandated by the state legislature. There are also GRIP projects that connect to this project at its southern terminus.

The corridor is one of 18 rural routes designated in the Governor's Roadway Improvement Program initiated in the 1980s to stimulate economic development through an improved transportation network connected to the interstate highway system. The program implemented in 1989 established a fund for improvements on the selected economic development highways to enhance connectivity and stimulate economic activities and growth, as well as provide effective, efficient, and safer transportation throughout rural Georgia. The 1989 GRIP identified a system of economic development highways that consisted of approximately 2,627 miles of existing primary routes, plus an additional 113 miles of truck connector routes. Improvements for widening and reconstruction of this system would place 98 percent of the state's population within 20 miles of a multi-lane highway and would provide access for oversized trucks to cities having populations of above 2,000. The GRIP system was approved for implementation by the governor and state legislature.

Traffic counts were collected on SR 133 to develop forecasts for the project's likely build year, 2010, and design year, 2030. By 2008, traffic volumes are projected to range between 6,500 and 17,000 vehicles per day (VPD) on the route, and are expected to increase to between 9,500 and 24,700 VPD by 2030. The percentage of truck traffic is unusually high within the project corridor, comprising up to 20 percent of the total traffic on the roadway.

As noted, an important purpose of the project is to improve safety along the corridor. There were 80 accidents within the project limits in 2000, 75 accidents in 2001, and 59 accidents in 2002. The existing SR 133 corridor possesses low accident rates overall; however, between 2000 and 2002, the roadway experienced substantially greater injury and fatality rates than statewide rates for similar roadways. The construction of a four-lane section with a depressed grassed or raised median along the entire corridor would improve safety conditions by separating directional traffic flow and controlling left turning movements while developing regional economic areas along the SR 133 GRIP corridor.