

# **Atlanta – Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation Project Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement**

## **Project Description**

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is continuing a study of high speed ground transportation (HSGT) between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The introduction of HSGT along this 110-mile corridor is intended to provide a means of transportation, other than roadway and air travel, that can move large numbers of people rapidly. The study involves analyzing and documenting major environmental impacts according to federal law. The environmental document, a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), will ensure that options for the proposed project are evaluated, including the option not to build the project; that all major transportation, social, economic, and environmental impacts are examined; and that the public can obtain information and make comments on the project to assist the decision-making process.

The Tier 1 EIS will evaluate possible HSGT options, which include station locations, storage and maintenance facilities, and HSGT technology (Maglev and Steel-Wheeled). A preferred technology will not be selected. The Tier 1 EIS will build upon previous Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT studies and examine engineering and environmental impacts at a broad level. It will provide the FRA, FHWA, GDOT, and TDOT with sufficient information to determine a general alignment, general station locations, and define the general operating and capital requirements of an Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT system.

## **Project Purpose and Need**

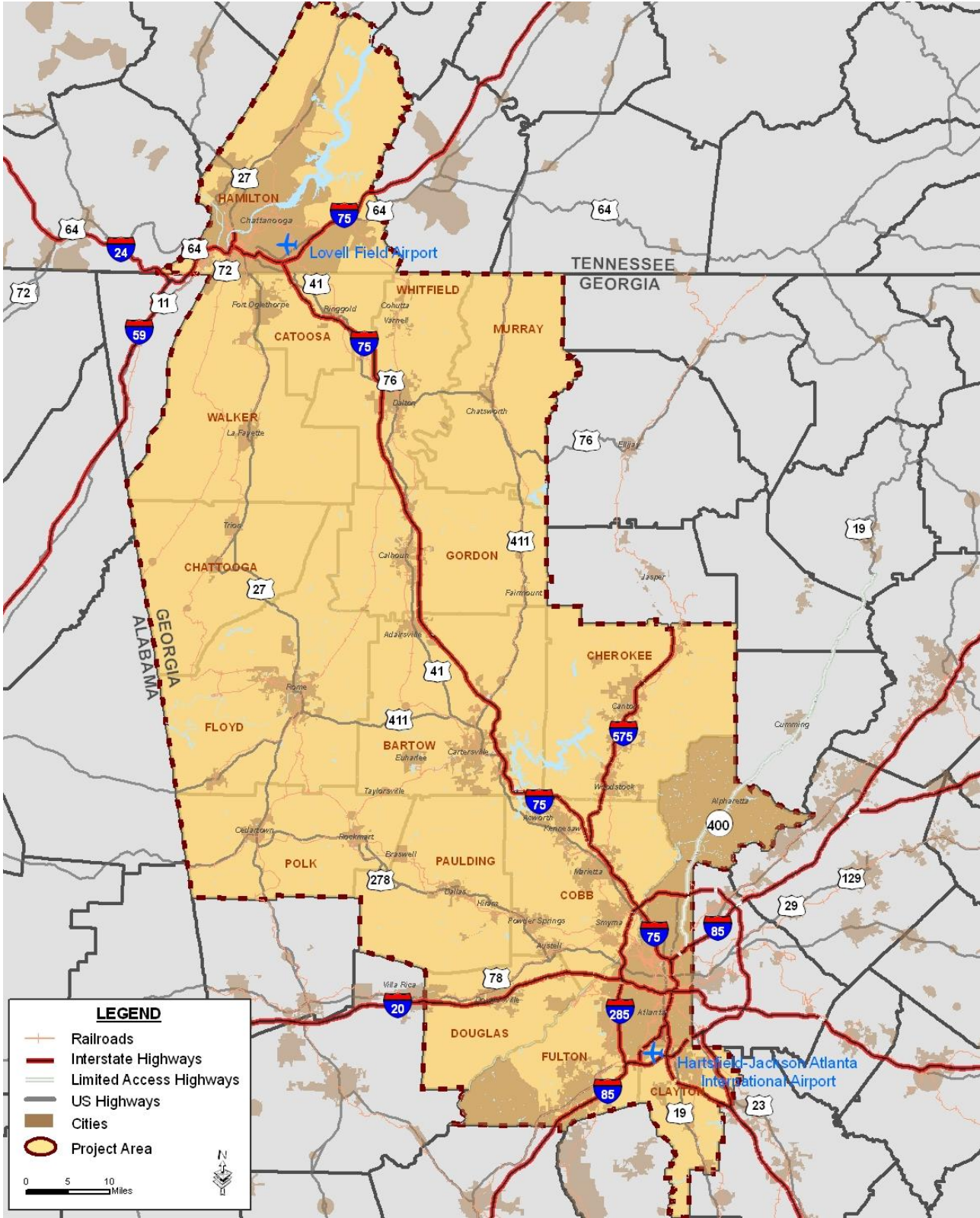
Transportation demand and travel growth, prompted by population growth and economic development, is outpacing existing and planned roadway capacity. Although capacity improvements to the state and interstate system within the project area are underway or planned for the near future, they are interim measures that will likely not address future capacity and mobility needs.

The purpose of the Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT project is to: enhance intercity passenger mobility in northwest Georgia and part of Tennessee, by expanding passenger transportation capacity, increasing mobility, and providing an alternative to highway and air travel in a manner that is safe, reliable, and cost-effective while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.

The needs for the HSGT project are summarized as follows:

- Address travel demand and population growth
- Provide high capacity versus highway capacity
- Enhance airport access
- Maintain or improve air quality
- Address safety deficiencies in the project area
- Support economic development
- Reduce energy consumption
- Enhance intermodal connections
- Address social demands of various population groups
- Support comprehensive land use planning and smart growth initiatives
- Provide link in Southeast U.S. Region HSGT system

# Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT Project Area



Source: AECOM 2010