

Public Notice
October 21, 2016
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Charleston District

**Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the
Proposed Jasper Ocean Terminal in Jasper County, South Carolina, P/N SAC 2015-01238**

The Jasper Ocean Terminal (JOT) Joint Venture, a partnership between the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) and the South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA), has submitted a proposal to construct a state-of-the-art marine container terminal in Jasper County, South Carolina. According to the JOT Joint Venture, the Ports of Charleston and Savannah are expected to experience limitations and inefficiencies in the future as a result of forecasted growth in the demand for containerized cargo within the region. The proposed JOT would accommodate an additional 7 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) per year. When added to the capacity of existing port facilities and planned improvements that are being developed by the GPA and SCPA, the proposed JOT would help meet the demand for containerized cargo within the region for the next 35 years.

Based on the available information, development of the proposed JOT would result in the dredging of navigable waters (approximately 439 acres) and potential impacts to wetlands and other waters of the U.S. (approximately 54 acres). Therefore, a Department of the Army permit pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (RHA) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) is required. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Charleston District (SAC) has also determined that the construction and operation of the proposed JOT has the potential to significantly affect the quality of the human environment and therefore warrants the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a Notice of Intent has been published in the Federal Register. The purpose of the Notice of Intent and this local public notice is to inform the public that the Corps is preparing an EIS to evaluate the proposed JOT. A public scoping meeting has not been scheduled at this time. However, a second public notice will be prepared by SAC, and meeting announcements will be published in local newspapers once the date and location for the public scoping meeting have been determined. In the meantime, individuals and organizations that are interested in the proposed JOT or whose interests may be affected by the proposed work are encouraged to review the available information on the project website (www.JasperOceanTerminalEIS.com).

Background: On March 12, 2007, the Governor of Georgia and the Governor of South Carolina signed a Term Sheet that identified the construction of a new marine cargo terminal in Jasper County, South Carolina, and the expansion of existing terminals in Georgia as the most practical means of increasing the cargo handling capacity of both states. During the past 5-7 years, the two ports authorities have purchased a 1,518-acre site adjacent to the Savannah River, gathered

preliminary information as part of their due diligence, and executed a Joint Venture Agreement that describes their plan to design, construct, operate, and jointly own the proposed JOT.

On November 24, 2015, the JOT Joint Venture provided the Corps with a general description of the proposed JOT and requested that the Corps initiate the NEPA process. Since NEPA and the Corps' regulations provide for the use of third party contracts during the preparation of an EIS, the JOT Joint Venture and the Corps worked together to develop a preliminary scope of work and to select a third party contractor. The term "third party contract" refers to a contractor that is paid by the applicant, but works at the direction of the Federal agency responsible for preparation of the EIS. The Corps and the JOT Joint Venture selected Atkins North America, Inc. to assist the Corps during the preparation of the EIS.

Scoping: NEPA is considered the "basic national charter for protection of the environment" and it contains provisions that require Federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the potential effects of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. One of the basic tenets of these regulations is that comprehensive information is made available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made or actions are taken. This information must be of high quality and must contain accurate scientific analysis which will be documented in an EIS.

The Corps, as lead agency for the EIS, is currently reviewing preliminary information about the proposed JOT and plans to hold a public scoping meeting during the first quarter of 2017. One of the primary goals of scoping is to identify significant issues that need to be analyzed in depth in the EIS and to identify and eliminate from detailed study issues that are not significant or that have already been covered by other environmental reviews. Public and agency involvement are essential to the process of identifying significant issues, obtaining relevant information based on personal knowledge or experience, and defining the scope of the EIS.

A public notice inviting Federal, State, and local agencies, any affected Indian tribe, and other interested parties to participate in scoping will be issued by the Corps approximately 30 days before the public scoping meeting.

Proposed Project: According to the JOT Joint Venture, long-term forecasts for containerized cargo predict continuing growth within the Southeastern U.S. driven by steady population increases throughout the region over the next 50 years. The Ports of Charleston and Savannah both operate at high volumes today and are expected to experience limitations and inefficiencies as a result of this forecasted growth in demand within the next 10 to 20 years. The proposed JOT would be located across the Savannah River from an existing Liquid Natural Gas Facility on Elba Island, Georgia, (**Exhibits 1 & 2**) and would increase the region's capacity to efficiently handle the forecasted growth in containerized cargo.

The proposed JOT includes a 12,500-foot long pile supported wharf designed to accommodate up to eight Neo-Panamax containerships, a container storage yard, an intermodal rail yard, gate facilities to process entering and existing over the road truck traffic, administrative buildings, and equipment service facilities (**Exhibit 3**). The proposed JOT would also include elements common to other types of industrial sites, such as a water tower, underground utilities, electrical substations,

backup generators, high-mast lighting, stormwater management facilities, perimeter fencing, and parking areas for employees and other personal vehicles.

Proposed transportation and utility improvements that would serve the proposed JOT include a 4-lane divided highway to connect the JOT to U.S. Highway 17 (**Exhibit 4A**), a double track rail corridor to connect the JOT's intermodal rail yard to existing CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern rail lines (**Exhibit 2**), a new rail bridge across the Savannah River (**Exhibit 4C**), and utility lines and intermediary facilities to connect to existing services (water, sewer, electricity, etc). Proposed navigation improvements include new work and maintenance dredging of berths, an access channel, and a 2,200-foot wide turning basin to provide vessel access to the existing Savannah Harbor federal navigation channel.

According to the JOT Joint Venture, a separate feasibility study will evaluate the costs and benefits of modifications to the existing Savannah Harbor Federal navigation channel. Should this feasibility study or the Corps' analysis of the proposed JOT determine that modifications to the federal navigation channel are required to operate the proposed marine container terminal, potential impacts to the human and natural environment (e.g., aquatic resources) associated with any navigational improvements will be evaluated and included in the EIS for the proposed JOT.

Public Outreach: At present, the following methods are planned to keep you informed and obtain your input.

- A) *Project Website:* www.JasperOceanTerminalEIS.com. Information and updates about the proposed JOT will be available on the project website throughout the NEPA process. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), descriptions of the proposed project, explanation of terminology, plan view drawings, a project schedule, meeting announcements, and an overview of the NEPA process are examples of the information that will be available at the project website. Visitors to the website will also be able to register for the project mailing list, sign up for an e-mail notification system, request copies of documents, and submit comments via a standard comment form.
- B) *Public Meetings and Workshops:* If you are a representative of a group or organization that you believe is a stakeholder in the proposed project, please introduce yourself to a Corps representative at the public scoping meeting and/or through written comments following the meeting. Future information workshops, public meetings, and/or public hearings will be announced on the project website and through the project mailing list.
- C) *Project Updates:* Project updates (public notices, newsletters, etc.) will be distributed at certain milestones during the NEPA process. These updates will normally highlight the status of the NEPA process, the preliminary findings of specific reports or studies, and/or new information about the proposed JOT.

Additional Review and Consultation: Additional review and consultation, which will be incorporated into the preparation of the EIS, will include, but will not necessarily be limited to, Section 14 of the RHA, Section 401 of the CWA; Essential Fish Habitat consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; the Endangered Species Act; Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; National Historic Preservation Act; and the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Act.

Contact Information: For further information and/or questions about the proposed project, please contact Mr. Nat Ball, Corps Project Manager, by telephone at 843-329-8044 or toll free at 866-329-8187, or by mail, email or via the project webpage at the addresses provided below.

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District
c/o Nat Ball, Special Projects Branch
69-A Hagood Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29403
- Project website – www.JasperOceanTerminalEIS.com
- Project email – www.comments@JasperOceanTerminalEIS.com

For inquiries from the media, please contact the Corps, Charleston District Corporate Communications Officer (CCO), Ms. Glenn Jeffries by telephone: 843-329-8123.

**Attachment A: Conceptual Drawings of the
Proposed Jasper Ocean Terminal**

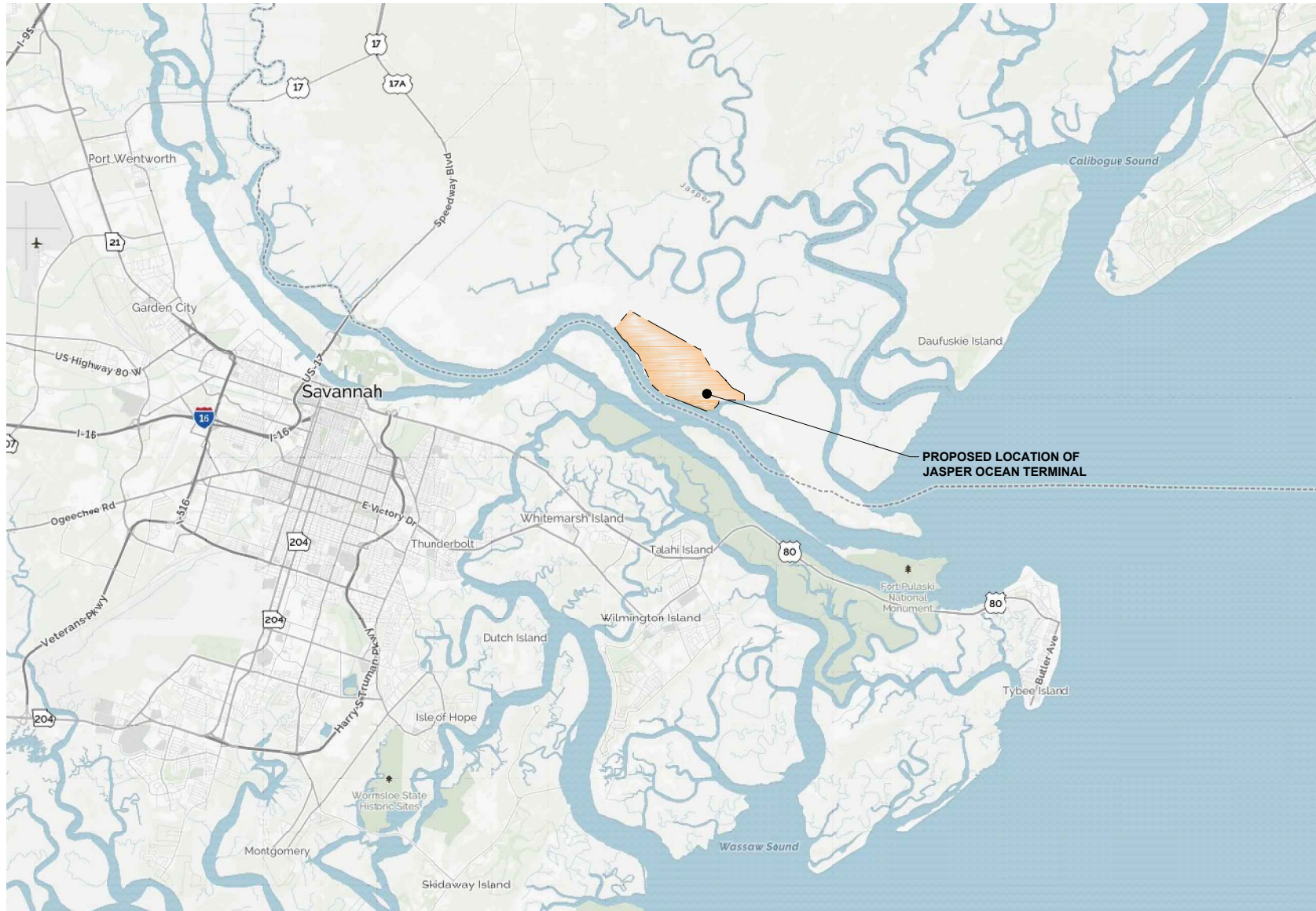
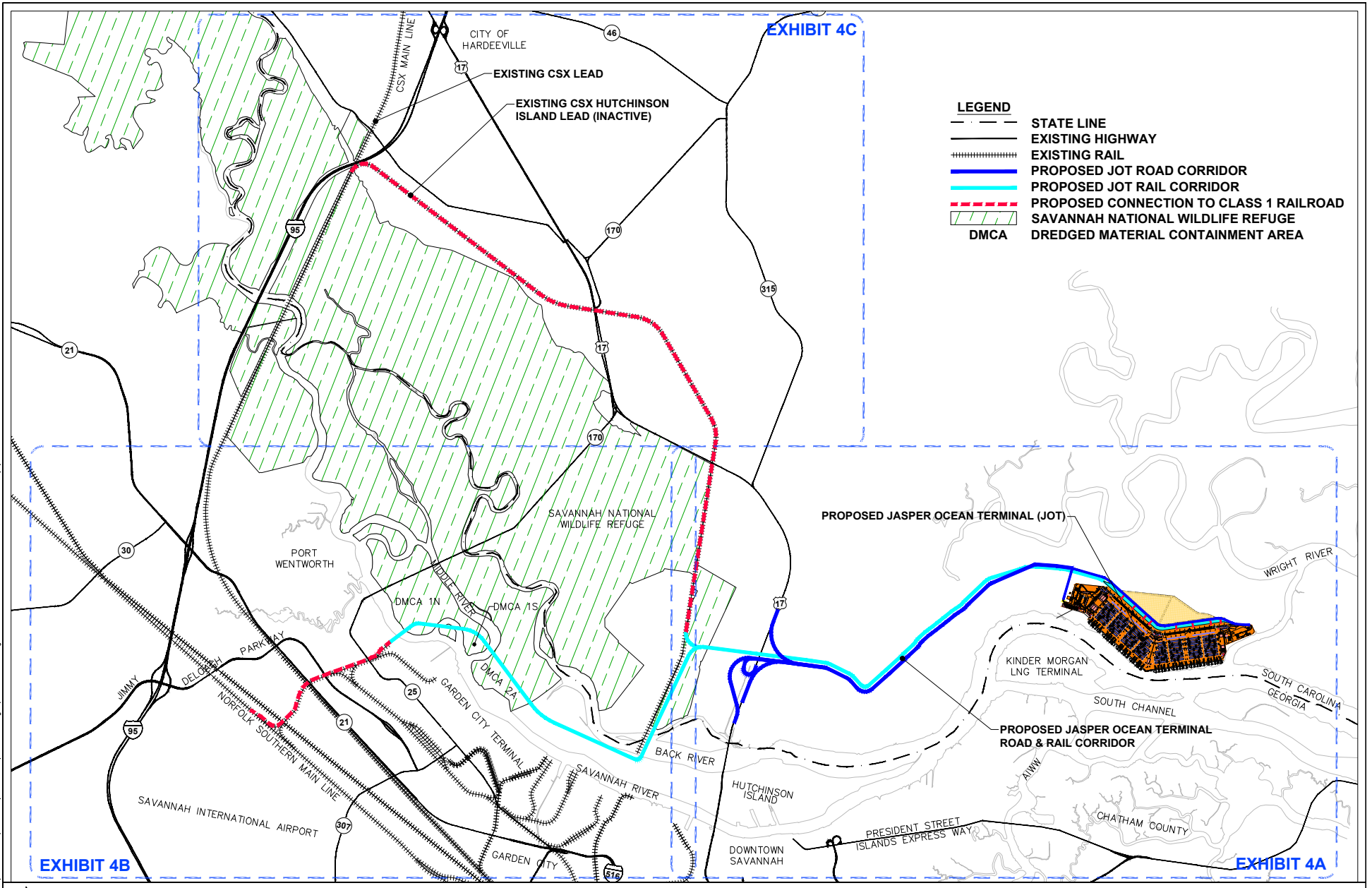


EXHIBIT 1 - VICINITY MAP



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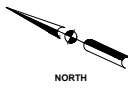
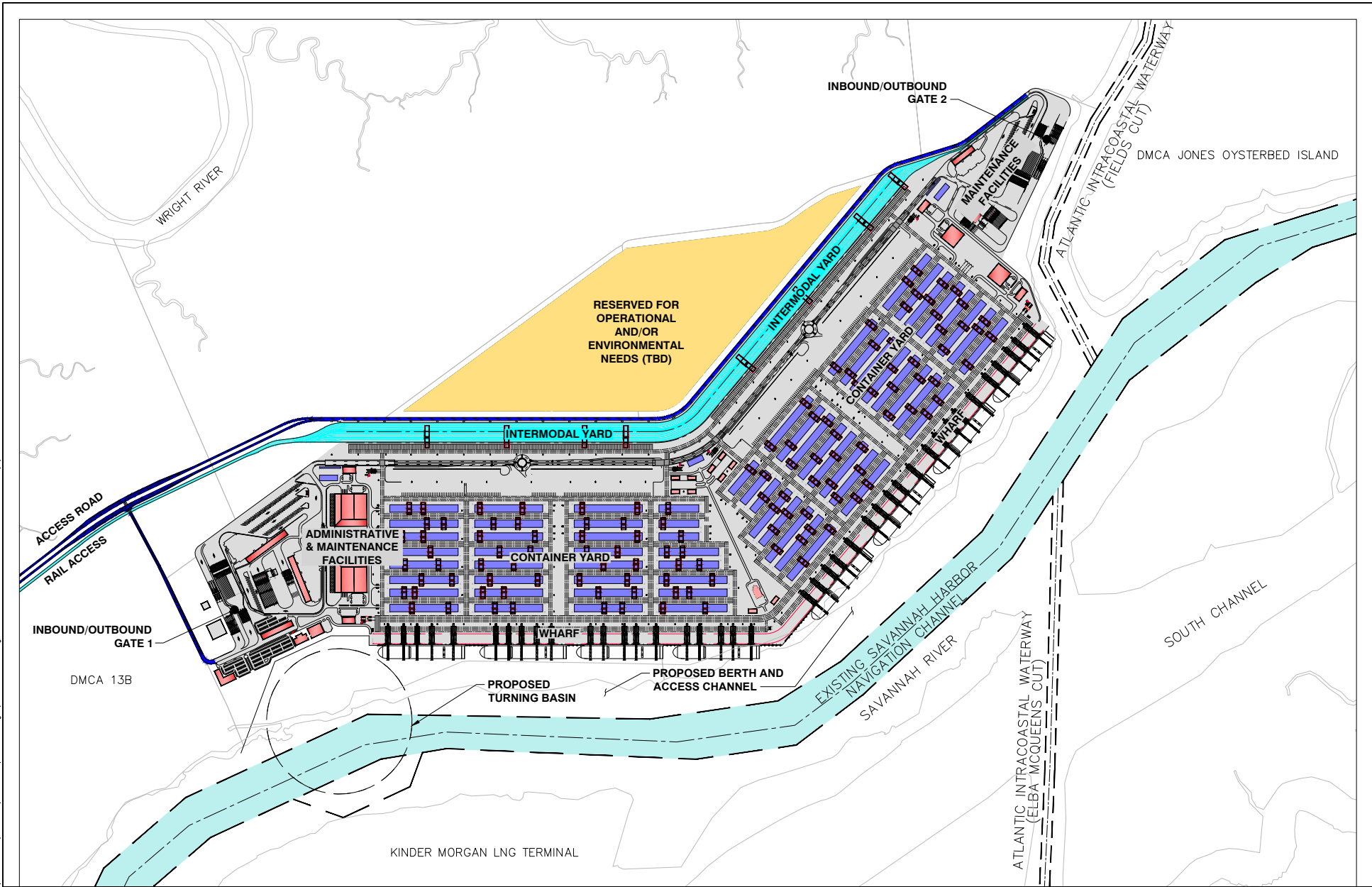


LEGEND	
	STATE LINE
	EXISTING HIGHWAY
	EXISTING RAIL
	PROPOSED JOT ROAD CORRIDOR
	PROPOSED JOT RAIL CORRIDOR
	PROPOSED CONNECTION TO CLASS 1 RAILROAD
	SAVANNAH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
	DMCA
	DREDGED MATERIAL CONTAINMENT AREA

EXHIBIT 2 - PROJECT OVERVIEW



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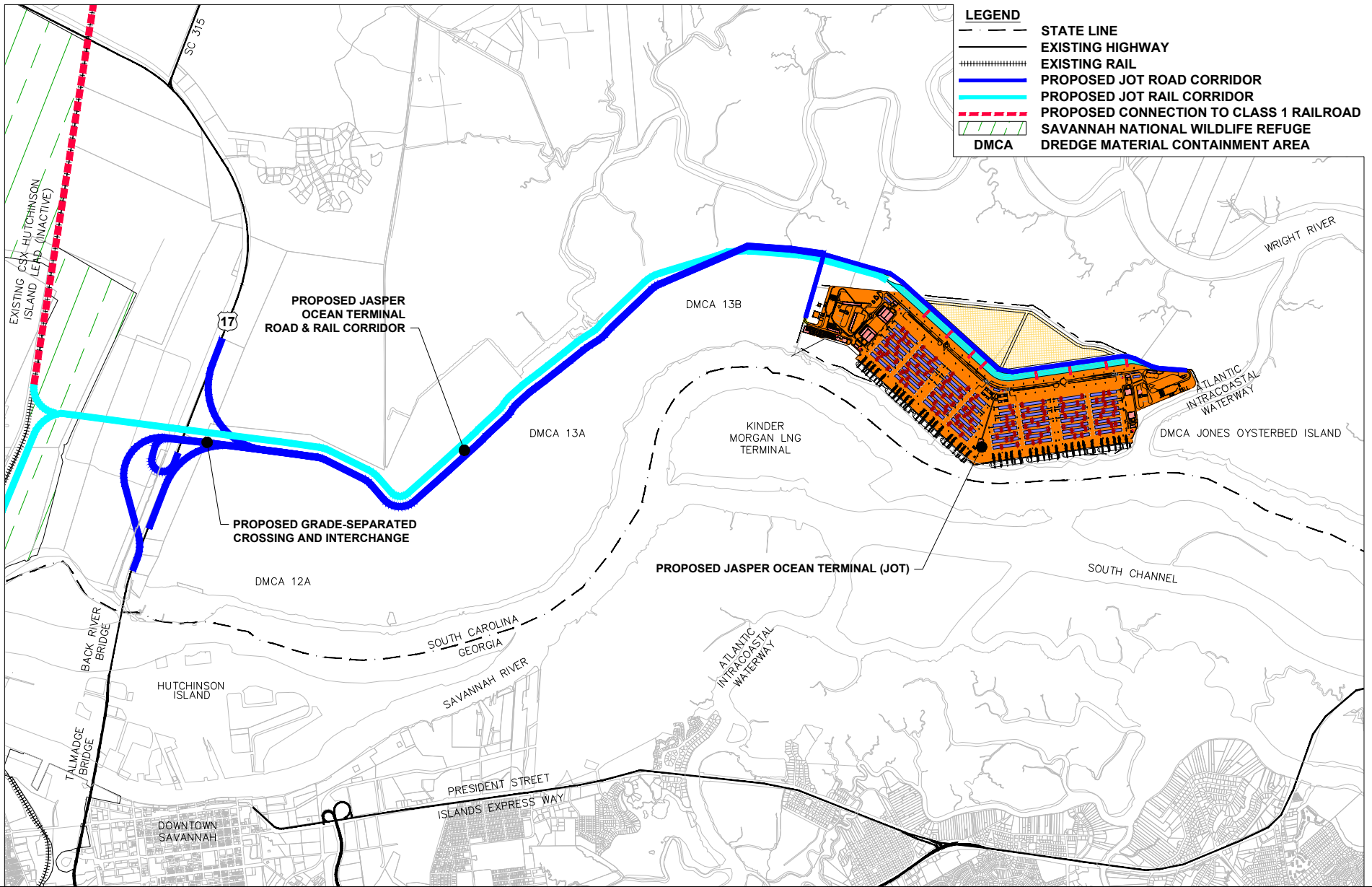


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 ——— EXISTING CHANNEL LIMITS
 DMCA DREDGE MATERIAL CONTAINMENT AREA

EXHIBIT 3 - PROPOSED TERMINAL



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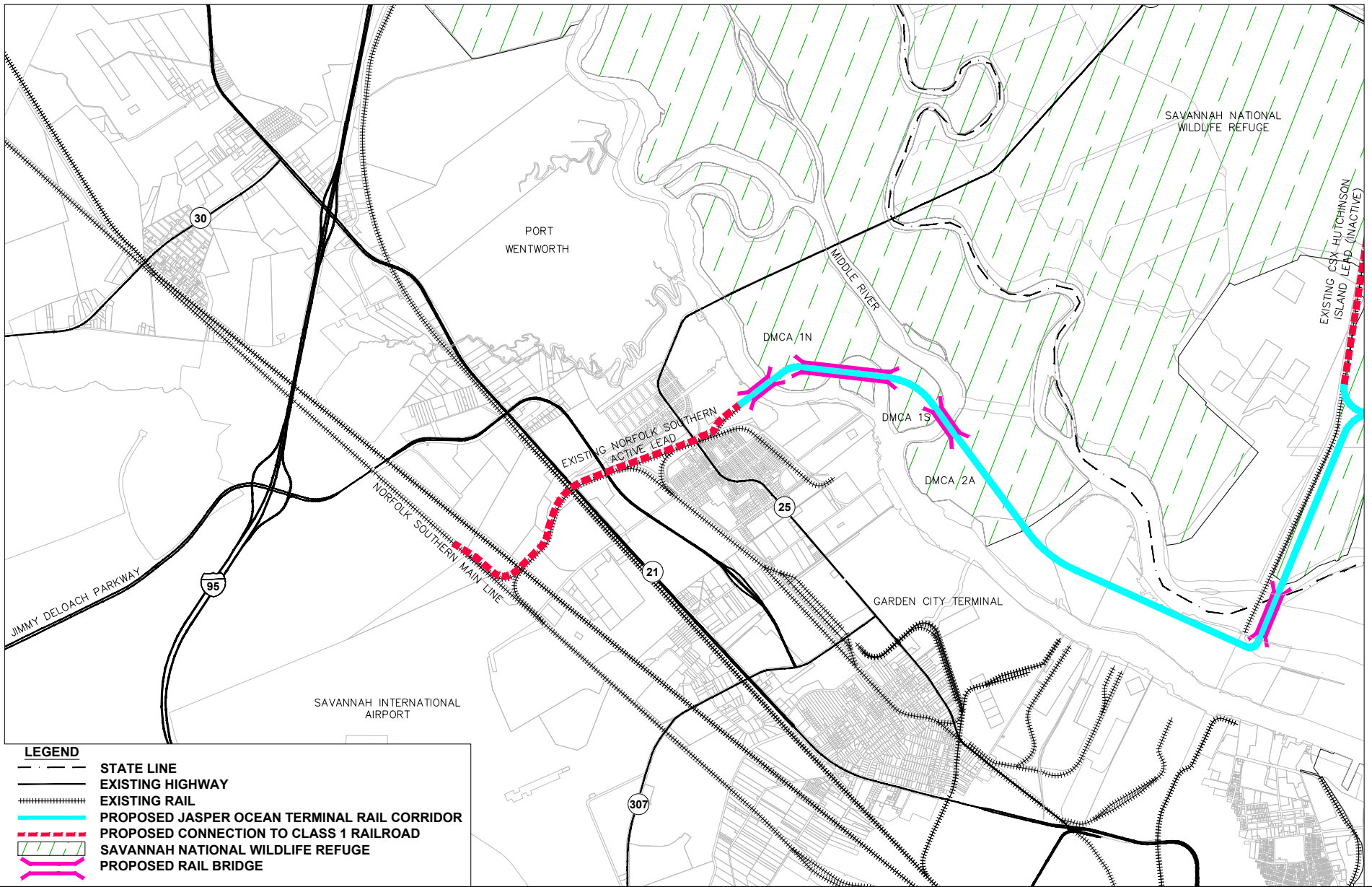
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	STATE LINE
	EXISTING HIGHWAY
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	PROPOSED JOT RAIL CORRIDOR
	PROPOSED CONNECTION TO CLASS 1 RAILROAD
	SAVANNAH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
	DREDGE MATERIAL CONTAINMENT AREA

EXHIBIT 4A - ENLARGED PLAN PROPOSED ROAD AND RAIL CORRIDORS

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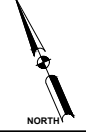


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LEGEND

- STATE LINE
- EXISTING HIGHWAY
- EXISTING RAIL
- PROPOSED JASPER OCEAN TERMINAL RAIL CORRIDOR
- PROPOSED CONNECTION TO CLASS 1 RAILROAD
- SAVANNAH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
- PROPOSED RAIL BRIDGE

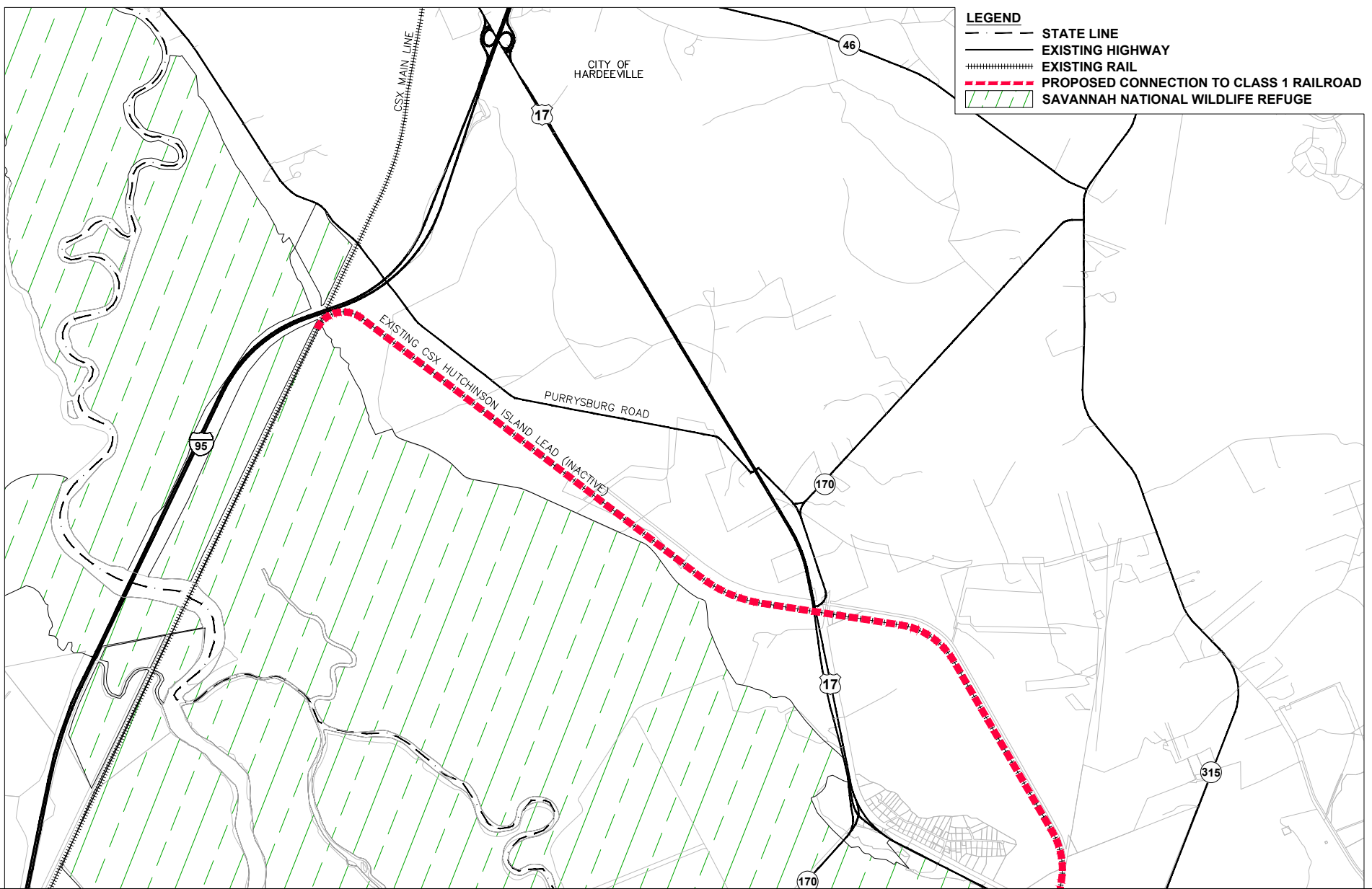


**EXHIBIT 4B - ENLARGED PLAN
SOUTHERN RAIL CONNECTION**

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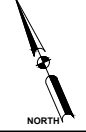


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**EXHIBIT 4C - ENLARGED PLAN
NORTHERN RAIL CONNECTION**

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**Attachment B: Preliminary List of Issues
to be Addressed in the EIS**

Preliminary List of Issues that May Be Addressed In The EIS

Transportation – Roadways and Railroads	Navigation
Water Resources – Stormwater Runoff and Groundwater	Federally Listed Threatened or Endangered Species
Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.	Sediment Quality and Dredging
Land Use and Zoning	Noise and Vibration
Flood Hazards and Floodplain Values	Air Quality
Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice	Visual Resources/Aesthetics
Fish and Wildlife Values	Light
Historic Properties	Recreation
Public Health and Safety	Sea Level Rise and Shoreline Erosion
Hazardous Waste and Materials	Energy Use and Greenhouse Gases