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GDOT Delivers Mitigation Plan for Macon’s Pleasant Hill Community

Macon, Ga. – Recognizing the importance and the historic value of Macon’s Pleasant Hill community, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has consistently worked to ensure that the history and culture of this community are preserved. Working in partnership with Pleasant Hill and the Macon-Bibb Community Enhancement Authority (MBCEA), led by State Rep. James Beverly, Georgia DOT has finalized a mitigation plan that demonstrates that citizens’ voices are heard and that the community’s involvement in decisions concerning the preservation of the historic value and culture of Pleasant Hill are reflected.

“We are pleased to have the involvement of the MBCEA and the Pleasant Hill community in finalizing our mitigation efforts,” said Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry. “This collaboration and partnership has resulted in our finalizing the mitigation portion of the project and clearing the way to move forward with the interchange project.”

The I-16/I-75 Interchange reconstruction project will improve the safety of the corridor by widening and reconstructing I-75 from Hardeman Avenue to Pierce Avenue and I-16 from I-75 to Walnut Creek within the City of Macon. Within this corridor, there are four interstate/arterial route interchanges (I-16 at Spring Street, Second Street, Coliseum Drive and I-75 at Hardeman Avenue) and a system level interchange between I-16 and I-75. Due to the magnitude and complexity of this project, there will be an impact to the Pleasant Hill community and as such, a mitigation plan is an essential piece of the overall project.

Much of the mitigation work focuses on the relocation of homes within the Pleasant Hill neighborhood. Georgia DOT worked with CEA—a local community entity that promotes community enhancement and economic development throughout Macon-Bibb County—to facilitate optimal mitigation success. MBCEA selected seven vacant lots and residential structures for relocation and rehabilitation in Pleasant Hill. In addition, MBCEA will build 17 new residential structures throughout the community with the goal of ensuring that a total of 24 homes are either relocated, rehabilitated or newly built. These houses will be compatible with the context of the historic community and will ensure that the cultural heritage of Pleasant Hill is preserved. Georgia DOT will relocate and rehabilitate the Penniman House, which was the boyhood home of celebrated artist Little Richard.

“The Pleasant Hill Mitigation Plan is a great example of all parts of a local community coming together to partner with a state agency to make great things happen,” said State Rep. James Beverly, chairman of the Macon-Bibb Community Enhancement Authority. “I am looking forward to working closely with GDOT and the Macon-Bibb County community at large to help this exciting project benefit the entire region.”

Cultural resource mitigation efforts will capture the oral and visual history of the Pleasant Hill neighborhood and include creating a linear park that will include green space and multi-use trail, lighting and information kiosks along the east side of I-75 and the creation of the Jefferson Long

Park on the west side of I-75. The Penniman House will be relocated adjacent to the Jefferson Long Park and will serve as a community resource center, where specially created mobile interpretative panels will be displayed.

Mitigation commitments also include constructing noise and visual walls along I-75 within Pleasant Hill; replacing the David Lucas Pedestrian bridge, transforming an existing open drainage ditch into a grass-covered culvert, and streetscaping (resurfacing and sidewalk rehabilitation) throughout the community.

The Georgia DOT is very proud of the mitigation work done on this project. The collaborative efforts and the beneficial dialogue have ensured the community's needs are respected and preserved. Our pledge is to keep the Pleasant Hill community informed as we move through the construction phase of this project. For more information on the project; visit www.dot.ga.gov/I-16I-75 or <http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/SpecialProjects/I16I75>.

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About the Georgia Department of Transportation

Under the leadership of Commissioner Russell McMurry, P.E., Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) plans, constructs, maintains and improves the state's roads and bridges, and interstate highways; and provides planning and financial support for other modes of transportation including rail, transit, general aviation, and bicycle and pedestrian programs. The department is also involved in waterways, including the Savannah and Brunswick ports and intracoastal waterway.

About the Macon-Bibb County Community Enhancement Authority

The Macon-Bibb County Community Enhancement Authority (MBCEA) was established to support the commercial development, elimination of blight, community improvement, and alleviation of poverty in Macon, Georgia. The programs of the MBCEA benefit local residents, small businesses and minority businesses serving this economically challenged area. Working in partnership with the local community and organizations, the activities of the authority are directed by State Rep. James Beverly, chairman, and its board of directors. For more information, visit www.MaconBibbCEA.com.