

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND
THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CONCERNING THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S
PARTICIPATION IN THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROJECT DELIVERY
PROGRAM PURSUANT TO 23 U.S.C. 327**

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (hereinafter "MOU") entered into by and between the FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (hereinafter "FHWA"), an administration in the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (hereinafter "USDOT"), and the State of Georgia, acting by and through its GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (hereinafter "GDOT"), hereby provides as follows:

WITNESSETH

Whereas, Section 327 of Title 23 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) establishes the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (Program) that allows the USDOT Secretary to assign and States to assume the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) and all or part of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities for environmental review, consultation, or other actions required by Federal environmental law with respect to highway, public transportation, railroad, and multimodal projects within the State of Georgia; and

Whereas, FHWA has promulgated regulations implementing the Program at Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 773; and

Whereas, Pursuant to the opinion of the Attorney General of the State of Georgia made in letters dated October 17, 2025 and June 10, 2026, which letters cite to Official Code of Georgia Annotated ("O.C.G.A.") § 32-2-2(a)(7), O.C.G.A. § 32-8-6(b) and relevant case law, GDOT is authorized to participate in the Program; and

Whereas, on XXXX, prior to submittal of its application to FHWA, GDOT published notice of, and solicited public comment on, its draft application to participate in the Program as required by 23 U.S.C. § 327(b)(3), and addressed the comments received as appropriate; and

Whereas, on XXXX, the State of Georgia, acting by and through GDOT submitted an application to FHWA with respect to highway projects in the State of Georgia; and

Whereas, on XXXX, FHWA published a notice in the *Federal Register* providing an opportunity for comment on its preliminary decision to approve GDOT's application and solicited the views of other appropriate Federal Agencies concerning GDOT's application as required by 23 U.S.C. § 327(b)(5); and

Whereas, the USDOT Secretary, acting by and through FHWA pursuant to 49 CFR 1.85(a)(3), has determined that GDOT's application meets the requirements of 23 U.S.C. § 327 with respect to the Federal environmental laws and highway projects identified in this MOU.

Now, therefore, FHWA and GDOT agree as follows:

PART 1. PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1. Approval of application - This MOU officially approves GDOT's application to participate in the Program and is the written agreement pursuant to 23 U.S.C. §§ 327(a)(2)(A) and 327(c). FHWA's execution of this MOU is based on GDOT's application dated XXXX, and consideration of any comments received during the comment period. As such, this MOU incorporates the application. To the extent there is any conflict between this MOU and the application, this MOU shall control.
- 1.1.2. Third party actions - Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327(d), and subpart 3.3 of this MOU, third parties may challenge GDOT's actions assigned under this MOU. Otherwise, this MOU is not intended to, and does not, create any new right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any third party against the State of Georgia, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents. Per 23 USC 327 (C), the State shall assume responsibility under the assumption of responsibility subject to the same procedural and substantive requirements as would apply if that responsibility were carried out by the Secretary. This MOU is not intended to, and does not, create any new right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any third party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents.
- 1.1.1. Severability - The assignment of responsibilities under this MOU is made pursuant to the authority granted to the USDOT Secretary under 23 U.S.C. § 327. Any provision of this MOU, or any portion of any provision, that is deemed to be illegal, unenforceable, or beyond the scope of the USDOT Secretary's authority shall be severed from this MOU, without affecting the validity of the remainder of the MOU. In such event, all other provisions or parts of provisions of this MOU shall remain in full force and effect.

PART 2. ASSIGNMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Assignments and Assumptions of NEPA Responsibilities

- 2.1.1 Responsibilities assigned - Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(A), and subject to subpart 2.2.3 below, FHWA hereby assigns, and GDOT assumes, all of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities for compliance with NEPA, 42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq., with respect to the highway projects specified under subpart 2.3. This includes statutory provisions, regulations, policies, and guidance related to the implementation of NEPA

for Federal-aid highway projects.

- 2.1.2 Public disclosure - On the cover page of all environmental analyses prepared under the authority of this MOU, GDOT shall insert the following language in a way that is conspicuous to the reader or include it in a Categorical Exclusion (CE) project record:

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated XXXX, and executed by FHWA and GDOT.

- 2.1.3 GDOT shall disclose to the public and agencies, as part of agency outreach and public involvement procedures, including any notice of intent or scoping meeting notice, the disclosure in subpart 2.1.2.

2.2 Assignment and Assumptions of Responsibilities to Comply with Federal Environmental Laws Other Than NEPA

- 2.2.1 Other Federal environmental authorities-Pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(B), on the effective date of this MOU, FHWA assigns and GDOT assumes, subject to the terms and conditions set forth in 23 U.S.C. § 327 and this MOU, all of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities for environmental review, reevaluation, consultation, or other action pertaining to the review or approval of highway projects specified under subpart 2.3, required under relevant Executive orders and all of the following Federal environmental laws related to highway projects:

Air Quality

- Clean Air Act (CAA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 7401–7671q, with the exception of any project level conformity determinations

Noise

- Noise Control Act of 1972, 42 U.S.C. § 4901-4918
- FHWA noise regulations in 23 CFR Part 772

Fisheries and Wildlife

- Endangered Species Act of 1973, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1531–1544
- Marine Mammal Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1361-1423h
- Anadromous Fish Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 757a–757f
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 661–667d
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 703–712
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. § 668-668d
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, as amended, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1801-1891d, with Essential Fish Habitat requirements at 16 U.S.C. 1855(b)(2)

Historic and Cultural Resources

- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, 54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.
- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 [Section 4(f)], 23 U.S.C. § 138, 49 U.S.C. § 303 and implementing regulations at 23 CFR Part 774
- Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. § 470(aa)–470(mm)
- Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. §§ 3001– 3013; 18 U.S.C. § 1170
- Archeological and Historic Preservation Act, 54 U.S.C. §§ 312501-312508

Social and Economic Impacts

- American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1996
- Farmland Protection Policy Act, 7 U.S.C. §§ 4201–4209

Water Resources and Wetlands

- Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1251–1387 Coastal Barrier Resources Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 3501–3510
- Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1451–1466
- Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300f–300j–26
- General Bridge Act of 1946, 33 U.S.C. §§ 525–533
- Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, 33 U.S.C. §§ 401–406
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1271–1287
- Emergency Wetlands Resources Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 3901 and 3921
- Wetlands Mitigation, 23 U.S.C. §§ 119(g), 133(b)(14)
- Flood Disaster Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4001–4130
- FHWA wetland and natural habitat mitigation regulations, 23 CFR Part 777

Parklands and Other Special Uses

- Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 [Section 4(f)], 23 U.S.C. § 138, 49 U.S.C. § 303 and implementing regulations at 23 CFR Part 774
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, 54 U.S.C. §§ 200302-200310

FHWA-Specific

- Planning and Environmental Linkages, 23 U.S.C. § 168, with the exception of those FHWA responsibilities associated with 23 U.S.C. §§ 134 and 135
- Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decision-making and One Federal Decision, 23 U.S.C. § 139
- Programmatic Mitigation Plans, 23 U.S.C. § 169 with the exception of those FHWA responsibilities associated with 23 U.S.C. §§ 134 and 135

- 2.2.2 Projects and responsibilities not assigned- In accordance with 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(D), any highway project or responsibility of the USDOT Secretary or FHWA that is not explicitly assumed by GDOT under this MOU remains the responsibility of the USDOT Secretary or FHWA. This provision shall not be interpreted to abrogate GDOT's responsibilities to comply with the requirements of any Federal environmental laws that apply directly to GDOT independent of FHWA's involvement (through Federal assistance or approval).
- 2.2.3 Government-to-Government consultation with Indian Tribes - The USDOT Secretary's responsibilities for government-to-government consultation with Indian tribes, as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(m), are not assigned to or assumed by GDOT under this MOU. FHWA retains responsibility for government-to-government consultation, including initiation of government-to-government consultation consistent with Executive Order 13175. A notice from GDOT to an Indian Tribe advising the Tribe of a proposed activity is not considered "government-to-government consultation" within the meaning of this MOU. At the request of the Tribe, FHWA may act as the main point of contact for a consultation related to NEPA or another Federal environmental law relating to a project. In such cases, GDOT will adhere to the results of any such consultation. This MOU does not prevent future agreements allowing GDOT to administer government-to-government consultation. However, such agreements are administrative in nature and do not relieve FHWA of its legal responsibility for Government-to-Government consultation.
- 2.2.4 Conformity determination - Nothing in this MOU shall be construed to permit GDOT's assumption of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities for conformity determinations required by Section 176 of the CAA (42 U.S.C. § 7506) or any responsibility under 23 U.S.C. § 134 or 135, or under 49 U.S.C. § 5303 or 5304 (23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(B)(iv)(II)). FHWA's Georgia Division Office will restrict its review only to that data, analyses, applicable comments and responses, and other relevant documentation that enable FHWA to make the project-level conformity determination.
- 2.2.5 GDOT 326 MOU in effect- The assignment under this Part does not alter the scope and terms of the Section 326 MOU signed on XXXXX, between GDOT and FHWA. As applicable, GDOT will conduct all environmental reviews authorized under the terms of that MOU.
- 2.2.6 Consultation letter disclosure - Included in each consultation letter that is submitted with any biological assessment, historic properties or cultural resources report, Section 4(f) evaluation, or other analyses prepared under the authority granted by this MOU, GDOT shall insert the following language in a way that is conspicuous to the reader or include in a project record:

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by GDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated XXXX and executed by FHWA and GDOT.

2.2.7 Existing environmental commitments - GDOT will continue to adhere to the original terms of Biological Opinions, Memoranda of Agreement, Programmatic Agreements, other agreements with terms, and conditions, and any other commitments that were the result of the environmental review process and consultations prior to the execution of this MOU as long as these terms are not amended or revised. Any revisions or amendments to these agreements made after the effective date of this MOU would be GDOT's responsibility. GDOT agrees to assume FHWA's environmental review role and responsibilities as identified in existing interagency agreements among GDOT, FHWA, and other Federal or State agencies, and/or negotiate new agreements, if GDOT agrees to assume FHWA's responsibilities of ongoing consultations as of the effective date of this MOU.

2.2.8 Section 4(f) Constructive Use -GDOT will not make any determination that an action constitutes a constructive use of a publicly owned park, public recreation area, wildlife refuge, waterfowl refuge, or historic site under Section 4(f) without first consulting with FHWA and obtaining FHWA's approval of such determination.

2.3 Highway Projects

2.3.1 Highway projects covered - Except as provided in subpart 2.3.2 of this MOU or otherwise specified in this subpart, the assignments and assumptions of the USDOT Secretary's and FHWA's responsibilities shall apply with respect to the environmental review, consultation, or any other action pertaining to the environmental review or approval of the following classes of highway projects located within the State of Georgia. The definition of "highway project" is found at 23 CFR 773.103, and for purposes of this MOU, "highway project" includes eligible preventative maintenance activities.

- A. Projects requiring an environmental impact statement (EIS), both on the State highway system (SHS) and local government projects off the SHS that are funded by FHWA or require FHWA approvals.
- B. Projects qualifying for a CE, both on the SHS and local government projects off the SHS that are funded by FHWA or require FHWA approvals, and that do not qualify for assignment of responsibilities pursuant to GDOT's Section 326 MOU.
- C. Projects requiring an environmental assessment (EA), both on the SHS and local government projects off the SHS that are funded by

FHWA or require FHWA approvals.

- D. Projects funded by other Federal Agencies, or projects without any Federal funding, that also require FHWA approvals. For these projects, GDOT would not assume the NEPA responsibilities of other Federal Agencies. However, GDOT may use or adopt another Federal Agency's NEPA analysis or documents consistent with applicable law, and USDOT and FHWA regulations, policies, and guidance.

2.3.2 Exceptions to highway projects covered-The following are specifically excluded from the list in subpart 2.3.1 of highway projects:

- A. Any Federal Lands Highway projects authorized under 23 U.S.C. § 202 ("Tribal transportation program"), 203 ("Federal lands transportation program"), or 204 ("Federal lands access program"), unless such projects will be designed and constructed by GDOT.
- B. Any project that crosses State boundaries and any project that crosses or is adjacent to international boundaries (23 CFR 773.105(c)). For the purpose of this MOU, a project is considered "adjacent to international boundaries" if it requires issuance of a new, or the modification of an existing, Presidential Permit by the U.S. Department of State.
- C. Recreational Trails projects under 23 U.S.C. § 206.
- D. For the lifecycle of Project DeRenne which includes the following Project PIs:
 - 1. PI 0008358; West DeRenne/Hampstead Avenue Connector
 - 2. PI 0008359; East DeRenne from Abercorn Street to Harry S. Truman Parkway
 - 3. PI 0010236; SR 21 From CS 346 / Mildred Street to SR 204
- E. Projects advanced by direct recipients of Federal aid highway funds other than GDOT, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Competitive grant programs
 - 2. Direct recipient tribal project
 - 3. Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Credit Program.

PART 3. CERTIFICATIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF JURISDICTION

3.1. Certifications

3.1.1. GDOT hereby makes the following certifications:

- A. GDOT has the legal authority to accept all the assumptions of responsibility identified in this MOU;
- B. GDOT has the legal authority to take all actions necessary to carry out all of these responsibilities it has assumed under this MOU;
- C. GDOT has the legal authority to execute this MOU;
- D. The State of Georgia has laws in effect that are comparable to the Freedom of Information Act at 5 U.S.C. § 552, and those laws are found in the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.); and
- E. The Georgia Open Records Act provides that any decision regarding the public availability of a document under that act is reviewable by an appropriate Georgia Superior court.

3.2. State Commitment of Resources

- 3.2.1. Financial resources - As required by 23 U.S.C. § 327(c)(3)(D), GDOT will maintain the financial resources necessary to carry out the responsibilities it is assuming.
- 3.2.2. Personnel resources - GDOT currently has and will maintain adequate organizational and staff capability, including competent and qualified consultants where necessary or desirable, to effectively carry out the responsibilities it has assumed under this MOU.
- 3.2.3. NHPA Standards - When carrying out the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended, GDOT staff (including consultants) shall comply with 36 CFR 800.2(a)(1). All actions that involve identification, evaluation, analysis, recording, treatment, monitoring, or disposition of historic properties, or that involve the reporting or documentation (including 36 CFR 800.11) of such actions in the form of reports, forms, or other records, shall be carried out by or under the direct supervision of a person or persons who meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR Part 61, Appendix A). GDOT shall ensure that all documentation required under 36 CFR 800.11 is reviewed and found adequate by a staff member who meets the Professional Qualifications Standards.

- 3.2.4. Environmental Toolkits -As part of its commitment of resources, GDOT will continue to develop, implement, and update its manuals and procedures which are not subject to FHWA review or approval, to support appropriate environmental analysis and decision making under NEPA and associated laws and regulations. GDOT recognizes it is solely responsible for the manuals and procedures for compliance with responsibilities assigned in this MOU and for establishing policy and guidance to implement its program.

3.3. Federal Court Jurisdiction

- 3.3.1. As required under 23 U.S.C. § 327(c)(3)(B), GDOT hereby expressly consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal courts in cases that involve the compliance, discharge, and enforcement of any responsibility of the USDOT Secretary assumed by GDOT under this MOU. This consent to Federal court jurisdiction shall remain valid after termination of this MOU, or FHWA's withdrawal of assignment of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities, for any decision or approval made by GDOT prior to termination and pursuant to an assumption of responsibility under this MOU.

PART 4. APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL LAW

4.1. Procedural and Substantive Requirements

- 4.1.1 Same procedural and substantive requirements- As provided at 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(C), GDOT shall be subject to the same procedural and substantive requirements as would apply if the responsibilities were carried out by FHWA, including Federal statutes and regulations, Executive orders issued by the President of the United States, USDOT Orders, FHWA Orders, and official guidance and policy.
- 4.1.2 Policy and guidance notice - FHWA will use its best efforts to ensure that any new or revised Federal policy or guidance relating to environmental review matters of national application, which are final and applicable to FHWA's responsibilities under NEPA and other laws that are assumed by GDOT under this MOU, are posted online at FHWA's Website and sent in writing to GDOT electronically to its Website at Program_Assignment@dot.ga.gov within 10 business days of issuance. When FHWA is considering changes to the Program or changes that may or will impact GDOT's assumed responsibilities or resources, FHWA shall seek input from GDOT. In the event a new or revised FHWA policy or guidance is not made available to GDOT as described in this subpart, and if GDOT had no knowledge of such policy or guidance, then a failure by GDOT to comply with such Federal policy or guidance will not be a basis for termination of this MOU.

4.1.3 Coordination with other agencies - GDOT will seek early and appropriate coordination with Federal Agencies concerning the laws, guidance, and policies that such other Federal Agencies are responsible for administering and which relate to GDOT's responsibilities under this MOU. Within six (6) months of the effective date of this MOU, GDOT will work with FHWA and the resource Agencies to determine whether any action should be taken with respect to such agreement. Such actions may include:

- A. Obtaining written consent to the continuation of an interagency agreement in its existing form, but with the substitution of GDOT for FHWA; or
- B. Amending an interagency agreement as needed so that the interagency agreement continues but that GDOT assumes FHWA's responsibilities.

If an affected Agency does not agree to modify an interagency agreement, then, to the extent permitted by applicable law and regulation, GDOT will carry out the assumed environmental review, consultation, or other related activity in accordance with applicable laws and regulations but without the benefit of the provisions of the interagency agreement

4.1.4 GDOT may enter into an interagency agreement with a Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency regarding appropriate processes and procedures to carry out the project-specific responsibilities assumed under this MOU. Although FHWA is not required to be a signatory, such an interagency agreement must conform with all provisions of this MOU, especially subpart 4.2.1.

4.1.5 Interagency Agreements - Upon termination of this MOU, GDOT and FHWA shall contact the Federal resource Agency to determine whether any interagency agreement should be amended or reinstated as appropriate.

4.2 Rulemaking

4.2.1 As provided under 23 U.S.C. § 327(f), nothing in this MOU allows GDOT to assume any rulemaking authority of the USDOT Secretary. In addition, GDOT may not establish policy and guidance on behalf of the USDOT Secretary or FHWA for highway projects covered in this MOU. GDOT's authority to establish State regulations, policy, and guidance concerning the State environmental review of State highway projects shall not supersede applicable Federal environmental review regulations, policy, or guidance established by or applicable to the USDOT Secretary or FHWA.

4.3 Effect of Assumption

4.3.1 For purposes of carrying out the responsibilities assumed under this MOU,

and subject to the limitations contained in 23 U.S.C. § 327 and this MOU, GDOT shall be deemed to be acting as FHWA or USDOT Secretary, as applicable, with respect to the environmental review, consultation, and other actions required under those responsibilities.

4.4 Other Federal Agencies

- 4.4.1 As provided under 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(E), nothing in this MOU preempts or interferes with any power, jurisdiction, responsibility, or authority of a Federal Agency other than USDOT (including FHWA), under applicable statutes and regulations with respect to a project.

PART 5. LITIGATION

5.1 Responsibility and Liability

- 5.1.1 GDOT solely responsible and solely liable -As provided in 23 U.S.C. § 327(e), GDOT will be solely liable and solely responsible for carrying out the responsibilities assumed under this MOU. FHWA and USDOT shall have no responsibility or liability for the performance of the responsibilities assumed by GDOT, including any decision or approval made by GDOT while participating in the Program.
- 5.1.2 Legal representation - GDOT shall defend all claims brought in connection with its discharge of any responsibility assumed under this MOU. In the event of litigation, GDOT will provide qualified and competent legal counsel, including outside counsel if necessary. GDOT will provide the defense at its own expense, subject to 23 U.S.C. § 327(a)(2)(G) concerning Federal-aid participation in attorney's fees for GDOT's counsel. GDOT will be responsible for opposing party's attorney's fees and court costs if a court awards those costs to an opposing party, or in the event those costs are part of a settlement agreement.
- 5.1.3 Notice of settlement - GDOT will notify FHWA's Georgia Division Office and U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) prior to settling any lawsuit, in whole or in part, and shall provide FHWA and DOJ with a reasonable amount of time of at least ten (10) calendar days, unless a shorter time is dictated by the court, which may be extended, if feasible based on the context of the lawsuit, up to a maximum of thirty (30) total calendar days, to review and comment on the proposed settlement. GDOT will not execute any settlement agreement until: (1) FHWA and DOJ have provided comments on the proposed settlement; (2) FHWA and DOJ have indicated that they will not provide comments on the proposed settlement; or (3) the review period has expired, whichever occurs first.
- 5.1.4 Notice of litigation filings- Within seven (7) calendar days of receipt by GDOT, GDOT will provide notice to FHWA's Georgia Division Office

and DOJ of any court decision on the merits, judgment, and notice of appeal arising out of or relating to the responsibilities GDOT has assumed under this MOU. GDOT shall notify FHWA's Georgia Division Office and DOJ within five (5) calendar days of filing a notice of appeal of a court decision. GDOT shall confer with FHWA and DOJ regarding the appeal at least forty-five (45) calendar days before filing an appeal brief in the case or any shorter time set by the court.

- 5.1.5 GDOT's notifications to FHWA and DOJ in subparts 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 shall be made by electronic mail to FHWA_assignment_lit@dot.gov, and NRSDOT.enrd@usdoj.gov, unless otherwise specified by FHWA and DOJ. FHWA's and DOJ's comments under subpart 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 shall be made by electronic mail to legalservices@dot.ga.gov, unless otherwise specified by GDOT. In the event that regular mail is determined necessary, mail should be sent to:

For DOJ:

Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources
Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

For FHWA:

Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration Georgia Division
75 Ted Turner Drive, Suite 1000, Atlanta, GA 30303

For GDOT:

General Counsel
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street NW,
Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

PART 6. INVOLVEMENT WITH FHWA

6.1 Generally

- 6.1.1 No project-level assistance - Except as specifically provided otherwise in this MOU, FHWA will not provide project level assistance to GDOT in carrying out the responsibilities it has assumed under this MOU. Project level assistance includes advice, consultation, or document review with respect to the discharge of such responsibility for a particular highway project. However, project-level assistance does not include process or program level assistance as described in subpart 6.1.4 of this MOU, including discussions concerning issues addressed in prior projects, interpretations of applicable law contained in Title 23 U.S.C. or Title 49 U.S.C., interpretations of any FHWA or USDOT regulation, or

interpretations of FHWA or USDOT policies or guidance.

- 6.1.2 No project-level intervention - FHWA will not intervene, broker, act as intermediary, or otherwise be involved in any issue involving GDOT's consultation or coordination with another Federal Agency with respect to GDOT's discharge of any of the responsibilities assumed under this MOU for any particular highway project. However, FHWA may attend meetings between GDOT and other Federal Agencies and submit comments to GDOT and the other Federal Agency upon request by either GDOT or the other Federal Agency and agreement by FHWA. FHWA will notify both GDOT and the relevant Federal Agency prior to attending any meetings between GDOT and such other Federal Agency.
- 6.1.3 Complaints by other Federal Agencies - FHWA will review concerns regarding GDOT's compliance with this MOU raised by other Federal Agencies. FHWA will notify GDOT of the potential compliance issue and will work with both GDOT and the relevant Federal Agency to resolve the issue and, if necessary, take appropriate action to ensure compliance with this MOU.
- 6.1.4 Request for assistance - At GDOT's request, FHWA may assist GDOT in evaluating its environmental program and developing or modifying any of its processes or procedures to carry out the responsibilities it has assumed under this MOU.
- 6.1.5 Providing information to FHWA - As provided at 23 U.S.C. § 327(c)(4), GDOT will provide to FHWA any information FHWA reasonably considers necessary to ensure that GDOT is adequately carrying out the responsibilities assigned to GDOT. GDOT's obligations and responsibilities under 23 CFR 1.5 are not altered in any way by executing this MOU.

6.2 MOU Monitoring and Oversight

- 6.2.1 Monitoring - FHWA will provide necessary and appropriate monitoring and oversight of GDOT's compliance with this MOU.
- 6.2.2 Audit - As provided at 23 U.S.C. § 327(g)(1)(B), FHWA shall conduct an audit each of the first four (4) years of this MOU. The purpose of the audit will be to ensure compliance with this MOU and with all Federal laws for which responsibility is assumed under this MOU. The audit will be carried out by an audit team determined by FHWA in consultation with GDOT. FHWA shall provide a reasonable opportunity for GDOT to provide feedback on the draft audit findings prior to publishing them in the Federal Register. FHWA shall publish the draft audit findings in the Federal Register for public comment. Within 60 days after the end of the public comment period, FHWA shall respond to public comments. The entire audit process, from initiation to completion (including public comment

and responses to those comments) shall not exceed 180 days in duration.

- 6.2.3 Internal quality controls review - In carrying out the responsibilities assumed under this MOU, GDOT agrees to carry out regular quality control and quality assurance (QA/QC) reviews to ensure that the assumed responsibilities are being conducted in accordance with applicable law and this MOU. At a minimum, GDOT's QA/QC process will include the review and monitoring of its processes and performance relating to project decisions, completion of environmental analysis, project file documentation, checking for errors and omissions, and legal sufficiency reviews, and taking appropriate corrective action as needed. GDOT shall finalize a QA/QC process that satisfies the requirements in this subpart. In developing and implementing the QA/QC process, GDOT shall consult with FHWA's Georgia Division Office. GDOT agrees to cooperate with FHWA to consider recommendations FHWA may have made with respect to its QA/QC process.
- 6.2.4 Self-assessment - GDOT shall perform annual self-assessments of its QA/QC process and performance to determine if its process is working as intended. If any process areas are identified as needing improvement, GDOT will take appropriate and timely corrective actions to address such areas. At least one month prior to the date of a scheduled FHWA audit, GDOT will transmit a summary of its most recent self-assessment to FHWA's Georgia Division Office. The summary will include a description of the scope of the self-assessment conducted and the areas reviewed, a description of the process followed in conducting the self-assessment, a list of the areas identified as needing improvement, any corrective actions that have been or will be implemented, and a statement from GDOT's Environmental Director concerning whether the processes are ensuring that the responsibilities GDOT has assumed under this MOU are being carried out in accordance with this MOU and all applicable Federal laws and policies.
- 6.2.5 Upon the effective date of this MOU, GDOT will maintain a list of NEPA approvals and decisions [CE, EA, finding of no significant impact, draft EIS, final EIS, final EIS/Record of Decision (ROD), and ROD)] and Section 4(f) approvals it makes under this MOU. GDOT will provide an updated list to FHWA Georgia Division quarterly.

6.3 Records Retention

- 6.3.1 GDOT will retain project files, and files pertaining to the discharge of its responsibilities under this MOU in accordance with 2 CFR 200.334 (3 years from the date of submission of the final Federal expenditure report) and the State of Georgia's records retention requirements, whichever is longer.

6.4 Federal Register

- 6.4.1 For any documents that are required to be published in the Federal Register, such as the Notice of Intent under 23 CFR 771.123(a) and the Notice of Final Agency Action under 23 U.S.C. § 139(1)(2), GDOT shall transmit such document to FHWA's Georgia Division Office, with a request for publication in the Federal Register on behalf of GDOT. The FHWA's Georgia Division Office will submit such document to the Federal Register within five (5) calendar days of receipt of such document from GDOT. To the extent that the operating procedures of the Government Printing Office and the Federal Register permit, GDOT will take over the procedures described above from the FHWA Georgia Division Office.

6.5 Participation in Resource Agency Reports

- 6.5.1 GDOT agrees to provide data and information requested by FHWA and resource agencies for the preparation of national reports to the extent that the information relates to determinations, findings, and proceedings associated with projects processed under this MOU. This includes GDOT being responsible for project status and information for EAs and EISs for use on the searchable Website maintained under section 41003(b) of the FAST Act [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, 42 U.S.C. § 4370m-2(b) and 23 U.S.C. § 139(0)] (Federal Permitting Dashboard) to be submitted in accordance with current and any future reporting standard issued by USDOT pursuant to such provisions.

6.6 Certification of NEPA Compliance

- 6.6.1 Before executing any Federal-aid project agreement for a physical construction contract, alternative delivery contract, or a contract for final design services, GDOT will continue to provide to FHWA's Georgia Division Office, as part of the Federal Project Authorization and Agreement process, the NEPA classification and clearance date for the project as recorded in the Financial Management and Information System. This will serve as GDOT's certification that GDOT has fulfilled all responsibilities under this MOU in accordance with relevant Federal laws, regulations, and policies.

PART 7. WITHDRAWAL OF ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 FHWA-Initiated Withdrawal of Assigned Projects

- 7.1.1 FHWA may withdraw the assignment of all, or part of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities assigned to GDOT for any highway project if:
- A. GDOT fails to comply with a material term of this MOU or applicable Federal laws or policies, and after being given

reasonable notice and opportunity to correct, GDOT does not take satisfactory corrective action;

- B. The highway project or highway projects involve significant or unique national policy interests for which GDOT's assumption of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities would be inappropriate; or
- C. GDOT cannot satisfactorily resolve an issue or concern raised in a government-to-government consultation process, as provided in subpart 2.2.3.

Upon FHWA's determination to withdraw assignment of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities under subpart 7.1.1, FHWA will notify GDOT of FHWA's determination, including reasons for its determination. Upon receipt of this notice, GDOT may submit any comments that would resolve the compliance concern or objections to FHWA within thirty (30) calendar days, unless FHWA agrees to an extended period of time. Upon receipt of GDOT's comments or objections, FHWA will make a final determination within thirty (30) calendar days, unless extended by FHWA for cause, and notify GDOT of its decision. In making its determination, FHWA will consider GDOT's comments or objections, the effect the withdrawal of assignment will have on the Program, the amount of disruption to the project concerned, the effect on other projects, confusion the withdrawal of assignment may cause to the public, the potential burden to other Federal Agencies, and the overall public interest. Following its final determination, when FHWA withdraws assignment for any project or projects, FHWA will assume sole responsibility and liability for the decisions and approvals it has re-assumed for the project or projects based on such determination. However, GDOT will remain responsible for other decisions and approvals for the project or projects, which FHWA has not reassumed responsibility or liability for, such as decisions and approvals beyond the scope of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA and related Federal environmental laws

7.2 GDOT initiated Withdrawal of Assignment of Projects

- 7.2.1 GDOT may request FHWA to withdraw all or part of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities assigned to GDOT for any highway project(s).
- 7.2.2 Upon GDOT's decision to request that FHWA withdraw the assignment of the USDOT Secretary's responsibilities under subpart 7.2.1, GDOT shall informally notify FHWA of its desire for FHWA to withdraw assignment of its responsibilities. After informally notifying FHWA of its desire, GDOT will provide FHWA written notice of its desire, including the reasons for wanting FHWA to withdraw assignment of the responsibilities. Upon receipt of this notice, FHWA will have thirty (30) calendar days, unless extended by FHWA for cause, to determine whether it will withdraw assignment of the responsibilities requested. In making its determination, FHWA will consider the reasons GDOT desires FHWA to

withdraw assignment of the responsibilities, the effect the withdrawal of assignment will have on the Program, amount of disruption to the project concerned, the effect on other projects, confusion the withdrawal of assignment may cause to the public, the potential burden to other Federal Agencies, and the overall public interest.

PART 8. TRAINING

- 8.1 GDOT may request and, subject to FHWA's resource availability, FHWA will provide training with respect to the responsibilities being assigned to GDOT under this MOU. Such training may be provided to GDOT by either FHWA or another Federal Agency or other parties, as appropriate. GDOT may also conduct its own training for staff and consultants.
- 8.2 GDOT will continue to implement training necessary to meet its environmental obligations. Within six (6) months of the effective date of the MOU, GDOT will update its training program to reflect the responsibilities assumed under the Program and this MOU. GDOT will be solely responsible for the development, implementation, and review of its training program.

PART 9. TERM, TERMINATION AND RENEWAL

9.1 Term

- 9.1.1. This MOU has a term of five (5) years, effective upon the date of final execution by both parties.

9.2 Termination by FHWA

- 9.2.1 As provided by 23 U.S.C. § 327(j)(1), FHWA may terminate GDOT's participation in the Program, in whole or in part, if:
 - A. FHWA determines that GDOT is not adequately carrying out the responsibilities assigned to GDOT;
 - B. FHWA provides to GDOT:
 - i. A notification of the determination of noncompliance;
 - ii. A period of not less than 120 days to take such corrective action as FHWA determines to be necessary to comply with this MOU; and
 - iii. On request of the GDOT Commissioner, a detailed description of each responsibility in need of corrective action regarding an inadequacy identified under subpart 9.2.1.A. above;

- C. GDOT, after the notification and period provided under subpart 9.2.1.B. above, fails to take satisfactory corrective action, as determined by the USDOT Secretary.

9.3 Termination by GDOT

- 9.3.1 Notice of termination-As provided at 23 U.S.C. § 327(j)(2), GDOT may terminate its participation in the Program at any time by providing to FHWA a notice by not later than the date that is 90 days before the date of termination, and subject to such terms and conditions as FHWA may provide.
- 9.3.2 Transition period- In the event of a termination by GDOT, FHWA and GDOT shall develop a plan to transition the responsibilities that GDOT has assumed back to FHWA and the USDOT Secretary, as applicable, so as to minimize disruption to projects, minimize confusion to the public, and minimize burdens to other affected Federal, State, and local agencies. The plan shall be approved by both FHWA and GDOT.

9.4 Validity of GDOT Actions

- 9.4.1 Any environmental approvals made by GDOT pursuant to the responsibilities GDOT has assumed under this MOU shall remain valid after termination of GDOT's participation in the Program or withdrawal of assignment by FHWA.

9.5 Renewal

- 9.5.1 This MOU is renewable in accordance with 23 U.S.C. § 327 and implementing regulations in effect at the time of the renewal.

PART 10. AMENDMENTS

10.1. Generally

- 10.1.1 All Parts of this MOU may be amended at any time upon mutual agreement by both FHWA and GDOT.
- 10.1.2 To the extent that GDOT seeks to amend its application (including this MOU) to request additional projects, classes of projects, or more environmental review responsibilities, such amendment shall be subject to the procedures of 23 CFR § 773.113(b).

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto have caused this MOU to be duly executed in duplicate as of the date of the last signature written below.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION/ FEDERAL HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION**

Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation

Dated:

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Russell R. McMurry, P.E.
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Transportation

Dated: