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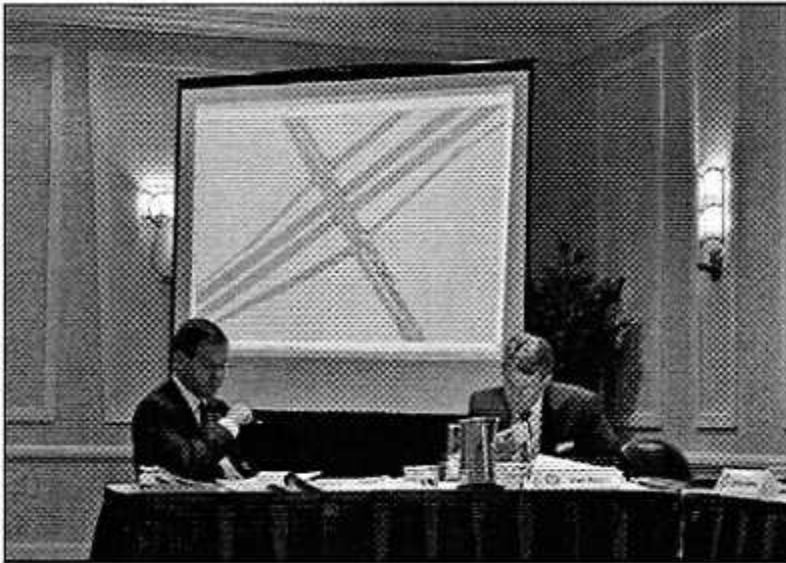
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## **Gwinnett Place CID Financially Strong; Looks Ahead At Fixing Pleasant Hill Road's I-85 Interchange**

February 10, 2010 by [Jamie Ward](#)

Filed under [Community Improvement Districts](#), [Gwinnett Place](#)

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From left, CID Executive Director Joe Allen and CID attorney Lynn Rainey listen to a presentation on diverging diamond interchanges. One is being considered at the Pleasant Hill Road bridge interchange with I-85.

DULUTH — After hearing from its Executive Director Joe Allen that the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District was financially strong, its board of directors Wednesday received a look at plans to fix and eventually replace the Pleasant Hill Road bridge connecting with I- 85.

Anyone who knows Gwinnett County traffic woes knows the Pleasant Hill Road bridge all too well. The plan moving through at present includes reconstructing the bridge with a diverging diamond interchange first. The long term plan that follows includes bridge replacement.

“It’s not a cure,” Allen told board members. “The long-term plan is still to replace the bridge. But this could be a quick win within the next year.”

He said the project once approved could be completed in one to two years.

A relatively new concept and one Allen said was one of the “top 10 inventions of the decade,” the traffic improvement system known as a diverging diamond interchange only exists currently in a handful of U.S. cities, the one most mentioned being Springfield, Mo.

Advocates of the system say it improves traffic flow by eliminating problematic left turns. What drivers might find strange at first is that it briefly sends all cars over to the left side of the road. Other potential concerns on Pleasant Hill could involve speed limits (45 mph vs. 35 mph) and the ability for large trucks to handle the new design.

“The current models show this would have a neutral impact on the freeway,” Allen said.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is reviewing the concept.

In a letter to U.S. Representative John Linder, Gwinnett County Commission Chairman Charles Bannister said, “The replacement of the Pleasant Hill Road bridge across the Interstate will be a cornerstone project to revitalize and promote economic development along this highly traveled corridor and enforces the goals of our 2030 Unified Plan and Comprehensive Transportation Plan.”

In other CID news, the district reported a nearly 25 percent reduction in overall crime in the CID’s boundaries from 2007 to 2009. Allen attributed the positive numbers to the continued and increased presence in the area of the Gwinnett County Police Department. Highlights of that 25 percent reduction included an overall 12 percent drop in commercial burglary, a 37 percent decrease in total traffic accidents and a 50 percent reduction in robbery. While total theft did decrease by 18 percent in the two-year period, there was a slight uptick of 14 percent from 2008 when 880 incidents were reported to 2009 when there were 1006 incidents.



Coming later this week, an exclusive interview with CID Executive Director Joe Allen.

To read a news story about the diverging diamond interchange project in Missouri, click: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=120403340>

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