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Thu, Dec 24, 2009 05:16 PM

**Top News Story - Gwinnett's Pleasant Hill Road project gets \$1M**

by Bob Repalis

write the author

December 23, 2009 | 03:21 PM  
**GWINNETT COUNTY** - Two bridges over I-85 in Duluth and Norcross will receive a total of \$1.5 million in federal funds for the replacement projects. The U.S. House and Senate approved transportation appropriations last week.

The Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village Community Improvement Districts (CID) have been championing replacement of the bridges on Pleasant Hill Road near Gwinnett Place Mall in Duluth and on Jimmy Carter Boulevard.

The funding included \$1 million for the Pleasant Hill Road project and \$500,000 from U.S. Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., for the Jimmy Carter Bridge.

Estimated costs from the interstate modification report prepared for Pleasant Hill Road is \$58.5 million, according to Joe Allen, Gwinnett Place CID executive director. He said the CID is in preliminary engineering and does not have a firm completion date. That depends on getting the remaining construction funds, "but if the stars were to align and we got funding as a result of action in D.C., we could be completed in five to six years," Allen said in an e-mail reply to questioning.

The Jimmy Carter Boulevard bridge will cost an estimated \$70 million, with a construction date by year 2013 if fully funded, according to Chuck Warbington, executive director of the Gwinnett Village CID.

Gwinnett County Commission Chairman Charles Bannister said replacing the bridges is critical to help incentivize revitalization in each of the CIDs.

"The business communities at Jimmy Carter and Pleasant Hill have been linchpins in Gwinnett's economy for decades," Bannister said.

County Transportation Director Brian Allen said Gwinnett County will continue to support the CIDs' efforts leading up to replacing the bridges.

"The county has shown its commitment to the projects with SPLOST funds, and we look forward to working with both CIDs, the federal government and the state to improve the interchanges so that commerce can again flow freely through these important business hubs," Allen said.

At Pleasant Hill Road, the Gwinnett Place CID has identified up to 20 percent of local funding - including CID and county dollars - for the Pleasant Hill Road Bridge replacement project, said Gwinnett Place CID Board Chairman Mark Williams.

"This new support greatly enhances the project and puts it in an even better position for completion," Williams said.

The Gwinnett Place CID recently contracted with URS Corp., to begin the preliminary engineering tasks associated with replacing the existing bridge. The goal is to install a higher-capacity system known as a "single-point urban interchange" to better accommodate traffic volumes.

The Gwinnett Village CID has secured more than \$12.5 million for the Jimmy Carter Boulevard Bridge Replacement project, including federal, CID and county SPLOST funds.

Gwinnett Village CID is well underway with design of the new bridge, which includes three additional lanes and upgraded signalization, said Warbington.

"This project will bring much needed relief to congestion in the area," he said.



The proposed single-point urban interchange design would allow three separate traffic flows. That means left turning traffic onto I-85 on one panel, left turning traffic onto Pleasant Hill Road from the interstate at another time, and through traffic on Pleasant Hill on another signal. (click for larger version)

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