



August 1, 2017

Thank you for attending the Public Information Open House for the proposed bridge replacement at State Route (SR) 135 over the Altamaha River, PI Number 0007037. Our goal is two-fold: 1) to provide you with information on the proposed project and 2) to provide an opportunity for you to give us your comments on the proposed project. In this handout package, you will find a description of the project, a location map, and a comment card.

As you enter the room, please take a look at the project display. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) representatives, wearing nametags, are available to discuss the project and answer your questions. There will be no formal presentation.

We hope you will take the opportunity to tell the GDOT what you think. Listed below are several ways to comment on the project. Your comments are important to us and, should you provide comments by one of the methods noted below, we will respond to you in writing usually within 30 days of the close of the comment period. All comments will become part of the project's official record.

While you are attending the open house, you can **provide your comments today** by filling out the comment card provided with this handout and dropping it in the comment box, or you may choose to provide your verbal comments to the court reporter who will transcribe your comments.

You can also **provide your comments by Tuesday, August 15, 2017** by using any of the following methods:

- Online at [www.dot.ga.gov/PS/Public/PublicOutreach](http://www.dot.ga.gov/PS/Public/PublicOutreach).
  - From the menu, select the county in which the proposed project is located and click *Go*;
  - Then select *SR 135 Bridge Over the Altamaha River*;
  - Lastly, click *Comment* and follow the instructions to leave your comments.
- Mail in your comment card to Mr. Eric Duff, Georgia Department of Transportation, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30308.
- Email Jordan Allen, the environmental analyst for the project, at [JoAllen@dot.ga.gov](mailto:JoAllen@dot.ga.gov).

The project displays and plans will be available for review for ten days after this open house at the website noted above. Hardcopies will also be available at the GDOT Baxley Area Office located at 740 Oakdale Circle, Baxley, Georgia 31513. Following the ten-day public comment period, a copy of all comments received will be available by request at the Atlanta address listed above.

Again, thank you for attending this open house. If you should have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact the project manager, Matt Bennett, at 912-271-7404 or the environmental analyst, Jordan Allen, at 404-631-1118 of the Office of Environmental Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Duff /mm".

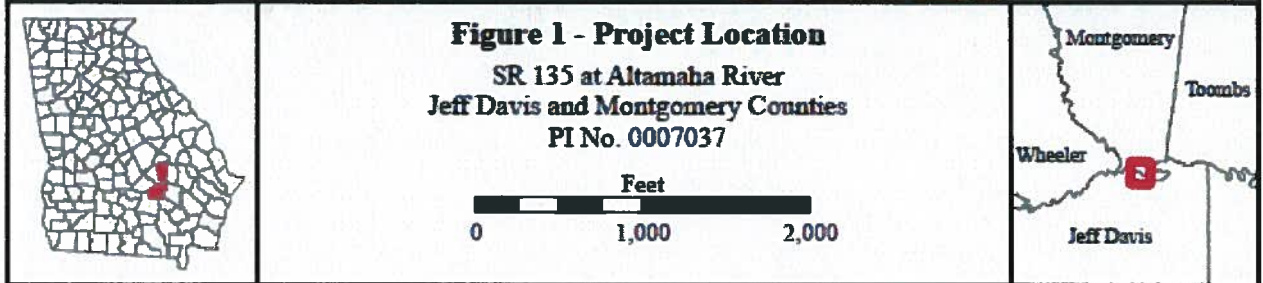
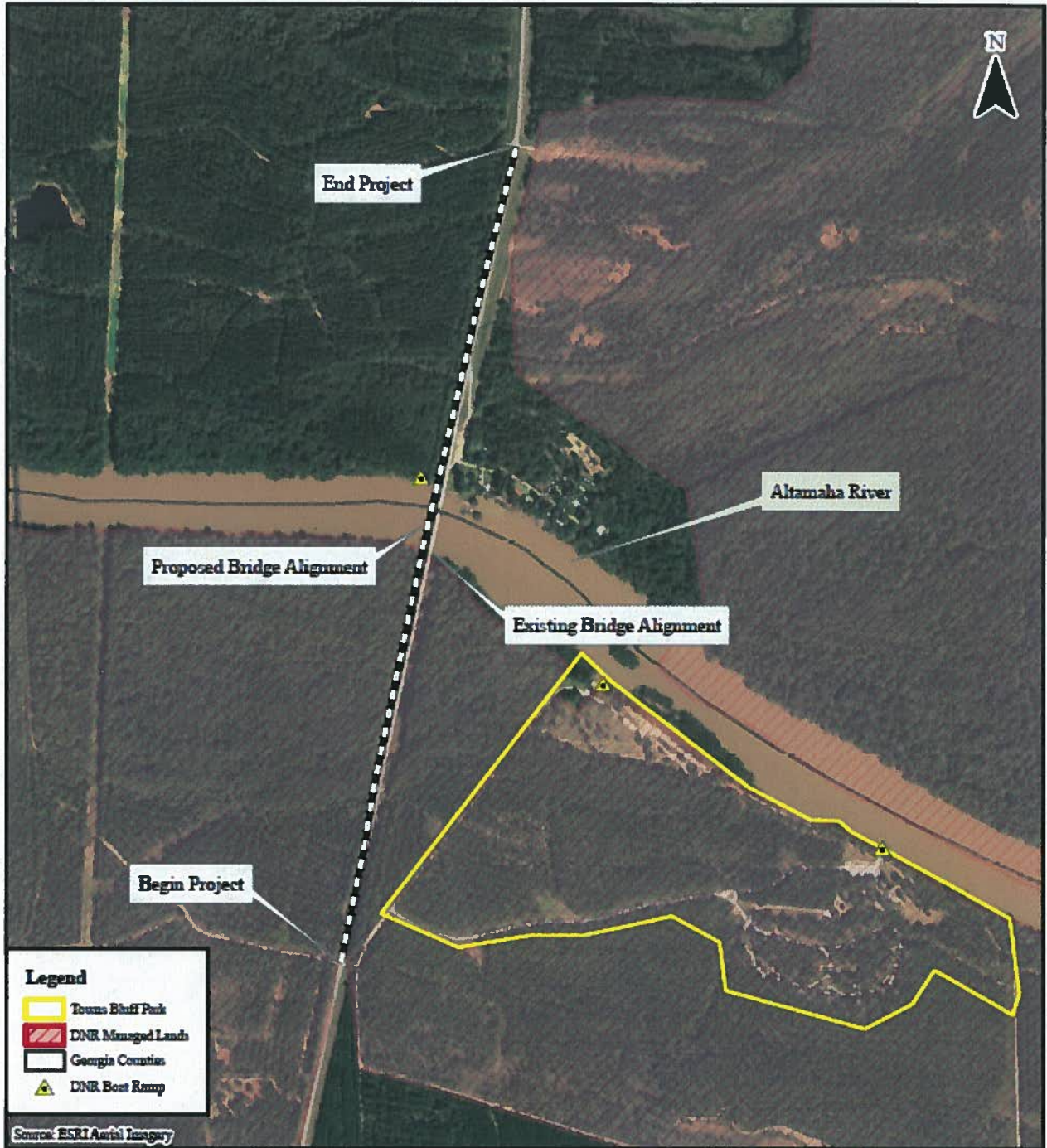
Eric Duff  
State Environmental Administrator  
Georgia Department of Transportation

**Why We Are Here:** The State Route (SR) 135 bridge over the Altamaha River was built in 1952, has a sufficiency rating of 20.2, and is structurally deficient. Sufficiency rating ranks the structural integrity of bridges on a scale ranging from 1 to 100. Any bridge with a sufficiency rating of 50 points or lower is a candidate for replacement in order to provide a safe, structurally sufficient bridge for motorists and pedestrians. The design vehicle used for this bridge is also below the current standards. Due to its low sufficiency rating and below-standard design vehicle rating, the SR 135 bridge is recommended for replacement.

**Project Description:** The proposed project would replace the existing SR 135 bridge over the Altamaha River (Structure ID 161-0020-0). The project is located approximately 7.2 miles northeast of Hazlehurst in Jeff Davis and Montgomery Counties. The existing bridge is approximately 2,573 feet long and carries two 12-foot travel lanes. The proposed bridge would consist of two 12-foot lanes with 8-foot shoulders and a design speed of 55 miles per hour (mph). The total length of the project is approximately 0.8 mile.

Since the December 2015 Detour Open House, the proposed design for the project has been reassessed based on public feedback. Feedback from the Detour Open House depicted major public concerns for both the distance of the detour as well as the negative impacts it would have on surrounding businesses. In particular, the proposed design was changed in response to concerns about the affect the detour would have on emergency services such as EMS and fire response time, and access to the regional hospital in Vidalia. The new proposed design eliminates the need for an off-site detour, but would necessitate building the new bridge on an off-set alignment approximately 28 feet to the northwest of the existing bridge alignment. This would allow the existing bridge to remain open to traffic during construction.

Multiple concepts for the new bridge alignment have been evaluated to minimize impacts to environmental resources and impacts to property owners. In particular, impacts to Section 4(f) properties have been taken into account. Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 refers to the temporary and/or permanent use and/or constructive use of land from a significant publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any historic site for transportation purposes. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Bullard Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) qualifies for protection as a Section 4(f) resource. The proposed project is anticipated to require approximately 3.8 acres of easement from within the Bullard Creek WMA for construction of the proposed bridge and approaches. The existing boat ramp adjacent to SR 135 would be closed during construction, and the boat ramp would be relocated following construction of the new bridge. Dependent upon the feedback as a result of this Public Information Open House, the DNR will be asked to concur with a *de minimis* (minimal) impact finding to the Bullard Creek WMA and the boat ramp to allow the project to proceed as planned. This Public Information Open House and the associated public comment period are considered the opportunity for public review and comment to fulfill *de minimis* requirements.



### Comment Card

Please print responses.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Do you support the project? (check your response)

- For
- Against
- Conditional
- Uncommitted

General Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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How did you hear about this Open House? (check)  Newspaper  Signs  GDOT Website  Radio

Word of Mouth  Social Media  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Was the location of the Open House convenient for you to attend?  Yes  No

If no, please suggest a general location that is more convenient to your community.

\_\_\_\_\_

Was the time of the meeting convenient for you to attend?  Yes  No

If no, please suggest a time frame that is more convenient for you.

\_\_\_\_\_

Were your questions answered by GDOT personnel?  Yes  No

Do you understand the project after attending this meeting?  Yes  No

Please share your suggestions on improving the ways GDOT conducts Open Houses:

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Mail to:  
 Mr. Eric Duff, State Environmental Administrator  
 Georgia Department of Transportation  
 600 West Peachtree Street, NW – 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30308  
 Email Jordan Allen: [JoAllen@dot.ga.gov](mailto:JoAllen@dot.ga.gov)