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RE:VISION 20|65 COALITION, FORMED BY LOCAL CITIZENS, GROWS TO NEARLY 200 MEMBERS

Coalition against overpass development reaches 198 members, over 500 Likes and Follows on Facebook

The City of Decatur filed condemnation actions against several property owners

Condemnation Hearings Originally Scheduled for May 6, have been pushed to May 21

Coalition urges citizens to contact state and local elected officials to and implore them to create a better plan for the region

DECATUR, Ala., May 6 - In April, local landowners and citizens formed the Re:Vision 20|65 Coalition to push back against the plans of the City of Decatur and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to build a new interchange across Highway 20 near Bibb Garrett and Mitchell Roads while closing medians and limiting access to land adjacent to Highway 20.

Since its launch, more than 180 additional citizens have joined the coalition, and more than 140 of those have indicated they are willing to have their name listed as a member. The Re:Vision 20|65 Facebook page has accumulated more than 500 likes and followers over the past few weeks.

John Eyster, one of the founders of Re:Vision 20|65, summarizes the issues the coalition has with the process carried out by the city, saying, "The National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) outlines the legal process for federally aided highway projects, to help communities make the best overall decisions before proceeding. Decatur chose not to follow this required process. The Re:Vision 20|65 Coalition, with nearly two hundred supporters and counting, was formed to help citizens understand these issues and to require our elected leaders to get this right. Getting it right means obeying the law, conducting the appropriate environmental assessment, and following the One Decatur Plan."

A group of property owners and members of the coalition added the City of Decatur to their lawsuit last month, which already included ALDOT and the Federal Highway Administration, citing the reasons above. They state that they were forced to act, because the city filed condemnation actions against several property owners to begin acquiring the land needed for the project. The first condemnation hearing was originally scheduled for May 6 but has been postponed until May 21.

In the meantime, the members of Re:Vision 20|65 are urging the community to contact their local officials and ask them to consider alternatives that will create a future for Decatur where everyone's voice is heard.

"To be successful, safe and convenient access to both sides of Highway 20 has to be delicately balanced with reducing congestion and increasing capacity for east-west traffic. The roundabout plan damages the city's future development potential here: the last, best chance for jumpstarting significant residential growth, diversifying the city's economy and helping revitalize Decatur," said Eyster.

While joining the coalition, another member agreed that the current plan needs to be revised to promote better growth and development that will draw people into the city, saying “Decatur needs to use its 1-65/20 intersection to promote Decatur!”

Coalition leader Eric Higgins added that now is the time to contact elected officials about the intersection.

“Decatur is actively working to take the property of local farmers and seventh generation land-owners for an intersection conceived without input and planned without common sense. We encourage all citizens of Decatur to contact their local and state elected officials to encourage them to work with our coalition to develop a better plan for the future,” said Higgins.

To learn more or look up the contact information for elected officials, visit www.revision2065.org, visit the coalition’s Facebook page, or email info@revision2065.org.