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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Georgia Tech’s Economic Development Research Program Selects  
City of Woodbury for Revitalization Initiative**

*Three-month project to help city develop, plan short and long-term economic development goals for job growth, downtown revitalization.*

**ATLANTA (May 20, 2020)** — The Economic Development Research Program (EDRP) at the Georgia Institute of Technology is working with Woodbury, a community in West Georgia’s Meriwether County, under an agreement to help a coalition of civic and business leaders develop a strategic assessment plan to guide the city’s economic development efforts.

The strategic assessment process includes an analysis of the community, starting with interviews with local and regional stakeholders. The completed assessment will also provide guidance on historic preservation as the city and local downtown development authority pursue redevelopment projects in some of Woodbury’s historic buildings in the central business district.

The project began in May 2020 and takes three months to complete.

“The idea is by pursuing strategic redevelopment projects that make sense for Woodbury and leverage its assets, that will spur small business and job growth in downtown,” said Candace McKie, an EDRP project manager. “One of Woodbury’s

strengths is that it is attractive to people seeking a slower pace of life in a community that offers the benefits akin to being in a big city.”

The assessment’s findings will help define Woodbury’s strengths and weaknesses and provide a preliminary vision to guide the city on attainable, effective actions to reach its short and long-term economic development goals. The strategic assessment will also aid Woodbury as it prepares its application for a Rural Zone designation by Georgia’s Department of Community Affairs.

Located in Meriwether County’s southeastern quadrant, Woodbury sits within the Three Rivers Regional Commission area, a 10-county body that provides a number of services, including aging programs, workforce development, transportation, and local/regional planning.

Woodbury — which is a little more than two square miles in area and home to about 900 residents — is an hour’s drive south from Atlanta. Incorporated as a city in 1913, Woodbury’s downtown has a rich history. The community has statewide appeal, drawing tourists seeking rare antique finds, as well as outdoors enthusiasts who participate in waterfront recreational activities on the Flint River, located just a short trip to the east. Designated a “Broadband Ready” community by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the city recently installed 1G internet service throughout the downtown area.

Even with Woodbury’s cultural and natural amenities, local officials say the city is ripe for revitalization. That is why the city sought to capitalize on its historic assets and redevelop the downtown and submitted an application to the EDRP.

“Partnering with Georgia Tech to complete our Strategic Priorities Assessment for our community has highlighted our community’s sense of pride and ownership,” said Woodbury Mayor Steve Ledbetter. “Collectively, we can make a difference. We can revive our downtown, bring new businesses into our community, and show our Georgia pride in Woodbury. We’re excited about this opportunity and look forward to implementing the plan developed through the EDRP program.”

Funded through a U.S. Economic Development Administration University Center grant, EDRP serves rural and economically distressed communities in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Powered by Georgia Tech’s Center for Economic Development Research (CEDR), EDRP leverages Tech’s assets to help communities engineer economic development success through affordable, in-depth research.

Communities that apply for a research grant have to commit local funds, based on ability to pay. That local funding maximizes resources and ensures community

involvement through all research project phases. Some recent EDRP studies include projects in Walker, Grady, and Liberty counties.

**About the Economic Development Research Program (EDRP)**

EDRP is Georgia Tech's signature program for providing affordable economic development research and analysis capacity for communities that need it the most. EDRP is funded through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's University Center grant program (Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute is a designated EDA University Center). EDRP is available to eligible communities across eight southeastern U.S. states. To learn more, visit [cedr.gatech.edu/edrp](http://cedr.gatech.edu/edrp).