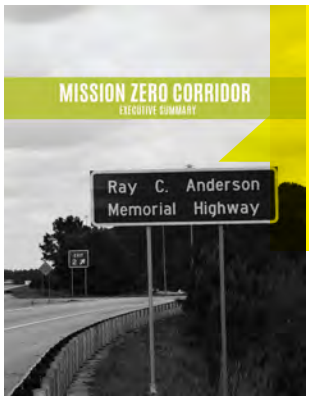

PARTNERSHIPS / LEADERSHIP

GEORGIA'S DRIVE-THROUGH INNOVATION LAB

In West Point at the end of June, less than a mile from the Alabama border, representatives from the **Georgia Conservancy** and the **Ray C. Anderson Foundation**, Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, and local government and industry leaders gathered to oversee the groundbreaking for a new electric vehicle charging station at the West Point Visitor Information Center. Not just any fuel pump, this state-of-the-art, solar-powered, rapid-charging Photovoltaic for Electric Vehicle (PV4EV) station, funded by a grant of more than $100,000 from local employer Kia, is the first of its kind at a visitor center in the Southeast—what Conservancy Senior Director Allie Kelly calls "Georgia's gateway to the west."

The West Point PV4EV project is also the opening salvo in a long-term campaign, with worldwide aspirations, to make highways safer and more sustainable—a product of the Foundation's drive, the Conservancy's know-how, and their respective networks. Through their work, the Ray C. Anderson Memorial Highway has become a 16-mile living laboratory known as **the Mission Zero Corridor**.

President Harriet Langford said the Foundation was established to maintain the environmental legacy of her father, entrepreneur Ray C. Anderson, whose company became a world leader in sustainable manufacturing. After his death in 2011, Anderson's name was given to the stretch of I-85 between his hometown, West Point, and LaGrange, where he founded Interface, Inc. "The honor was a great one," said Langford, "but the road itself made the Foundation uneasy. Highways are dirty. Ray would have asked, 'How do we make this better?' So we did, too."

Funding a study by the Georgia Conservancy and Georgia Tech's School of Architecture, the Foundation produced a blueprint for "the cleanest, safest, smartest, and most efficient highway in the world." While attracting local support and cutting-edge technology from across the globe, said Langford, they're also "adjusting to the learning curve, and figuring out how to implement all the great things that Georgia Tech students and others have come up with."

"It's a test model for the world," said Kelly. "Data from the corridor will lead us to discover best practices that can be replicated everywhere. Sustainability, safety, reducing maintenance costs, anticipating climate change: these are universal infrastructure challenges."

Marc Schultz is managing editor of NOW.