



I-85 HOT LANES

Partnership for Progress

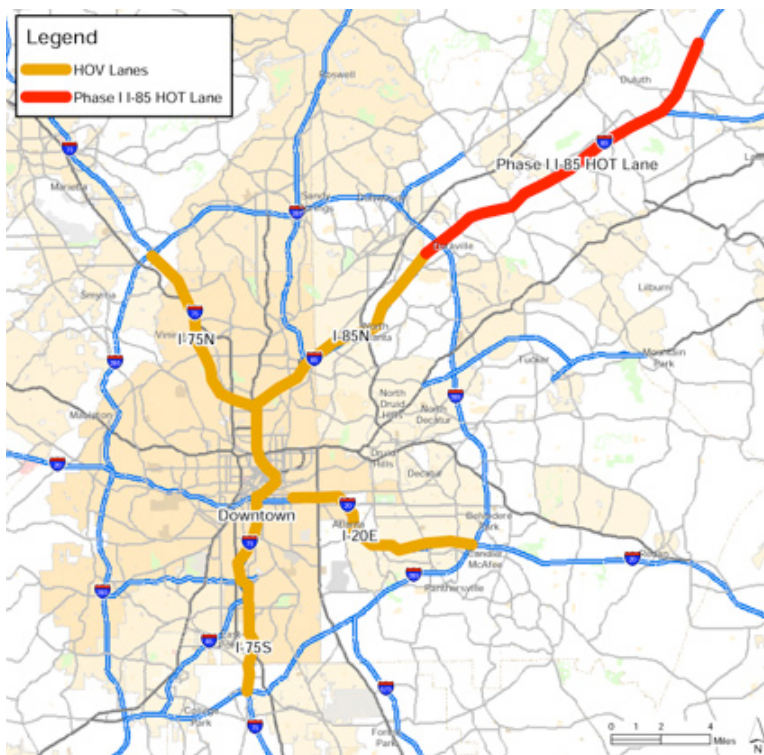
AUGUST 2009

I-85 HOT (High Occupancy Toll) Lanes

Thank you for your continued interest in the I-85 HOT Lanes project, which involves converting approximately 15 miles of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on the I-85 corridor from south of I-285 in DeKalb County to Old Peachtree Road in Gwinnett County.



This update discusses recent project happenings and next steps in the process. Please forward this email to others who are interested in the project. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/I85hotlanes.



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Achieving Major Milestones

In recent months, the project achieved several critical milestones. Two of these milestones were required in order to access the \$110 million of federal funds awarded through USDOT:

1. In April, the State Transportation Board approved a resolution requiring carpools to have three or more occupants to use the HOT lanes toll-free.
2. The project was incorporated into the Atlanta region's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), which were approved in May and June respectively.

Both of these actions were significant, as they demonstrate the region's commitment to providing greater travel reliability and options using HOT Lanes.

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Talking to the Public

Public outreach efforts are ongoing. About 500 people attended eight public information open houses sponsored by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) in late March, early April, late June, and early July as part of the NEPA (federal environmental permitting) process. Participant feedback included concerns about equity and enforcement, the effect on two-person carpoolers, and an interest in the technology the project will bring to the region.



In addition to the NEPA public outreach efforts, the following outreach activities took place:

- Six focus groups with single occupant drivers and carpoolers in the I-85 corridor.
- Survey of more than 700 carpoolers in the I-85 corridor completed in collaboration with the Clean Air Campaign.
- One-on-one briefings are being conducted to elected officials, media outlets, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, and other stakeholders by State Road and Toll Authority (SRTA) Executive Director Gena Evans, GDOT Chief Engineer Gerald Ross and others. Members of the project team are available to speak to other interested groups on request – contact Cherie Gibson at cjibson@georgiatolls.com for more information.

Overall, as more and more people learn about how HOT lanes will help manage congestion, their reaction to the project becomes more positive.

For a detailed summary of past public information open houses or the public involvement process, visit www.dot.ga.gov/I85hotlanes.

An Update on Transit



The transit component of the I-85 Hot Lanes project will provide additional transportation options for commuters. The Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) is currently procuring 36 new commuter coach buses that will support seven routes serving the I-85 project corridor. In addition, GRTA is breaking ground on two park-and-ride lots at Hamilton Mill and Cedars Road, which will supply 1,900 new parking spaces and provide reliable transit connections to Midtown, Downtown, and the Lindbergh MARTA station. Transit will use the HOT lane toll-free.

Pricing: A Dynamic Solution

To date, a major point of interest has been the price for using the HOT lane. In order to ensure trip time reliability in the corridor, the HOT lane will be dynamically priced - the cost to use the HOT lane will fluctuate with the level of congestion. The estimated average trip length of six to seven miles may result in a typical toll price ranging from \$0.60 to \$6.00 per trip depending on congestion. It is estimated that over 90 percent of customers will pay less than \$5.00 for their HOT lane trip. Approximately 25 percent of customers will use the HOT lane for free, including passenger vehicles with three or more occupants, transit, motorcycles, and other qualified vehicles.

Next Steps

As part of the NEPA process, a draft Environmental Assessment is currently being developed. A public hearing open house and the associated 15-day comment period will take place this fall.

SRTA and GDOT are now in the process of developing business rules and policies that will govern how the HOT lane will operate and how revenue will be used. In addition, SRTA will soon begin the procurement process for the tolling system technology.

Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in spring 2010, with an expected opening date of January 31, 2011.