



I-85 HOT LANES

Partnership for Progress

www.dot.ga.gov/I85hotlanes

NOVEMBER 2009

HOT News

The I-85 HOT Lane newsletter is designed to keep members of the community informed on the progress of the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane project.

The newsletter focuses on the proposed 16-mile HOT lane in the I-85 corridor from Chamblee Tucker Road just south of I-285 to Old Peachtree Road in Gwinnett County.

Readers are encouraged to forward the newsletter to others that may be interested in the project. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/I85hotlanes.



Public Hearing Open House Scheduled Final Meeting for Public Comments

The public is once again invited to meet with Georgia Department of Transportation officials to obtain information and voice its opinions about the planned HOT lane project. The public is encouraged to attend a public hearing open house set for Thursday, November 12 at the Gwinnett Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway in Duluth, from 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The public hearing will be held in rooms 2AB and 3AB of the Convention Center.

In addition to being available to explain all aspects of the HOT lane conversion and concurrent transit projects, transportation officials will also have a series of visual aids including charts, videos, and handout materials. After the meeting, all the information will be available on the DOT website at www.dot.ga.gov/I85hotlanes under the "Public Involvement" section.

The last series of public information open houses attracted close to 500 people and solicited more than 350 comments. Responses to the comments are available in the recently approved Draft Environmental Assessment (EA). [Pdf of Draft EA \(13.4mb\)](#).

The Draft EA is designed to determine any significant impacts that may result from the project. Comments to be included in the final environmental document will be accepted at hotlanecomment@jacobs.com through November 23, 2009.

The federal environmental process is expected to be completed by the end of 2009. Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in Spring 2010.

Public Hearing Open House

HOT News

- [Public Hearing Scheduled](#)
- [New Transit Enhancements](#)
- [HOT Lanes are HOT News](#)

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Office of Governor Sonny Perdue



Georgia Department of Public Safety



November 12, 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Gwinnett Center 6400
Sugarloaf Parkway
Duluth, GA 30097

In another milestone for the project, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the substitute Transportation Control Measure (TCM) provided by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and has determined that it meets the Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 176(c)(8) requirements for substitute TCMs. As a result of this approval, the HOV to HOT conversion, if approved through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, will also be in conformance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP). This means that HOT will be viewed as a transportation control measure from an air conformity stand point.

[top](#)

New Express Buses, Park and Ride Facilities a Bonus



New express service buses, expanded park and ride facilities, and an orderly flow of transit into and out of downtown are all expected to be part of the HOV to HOT lane project.

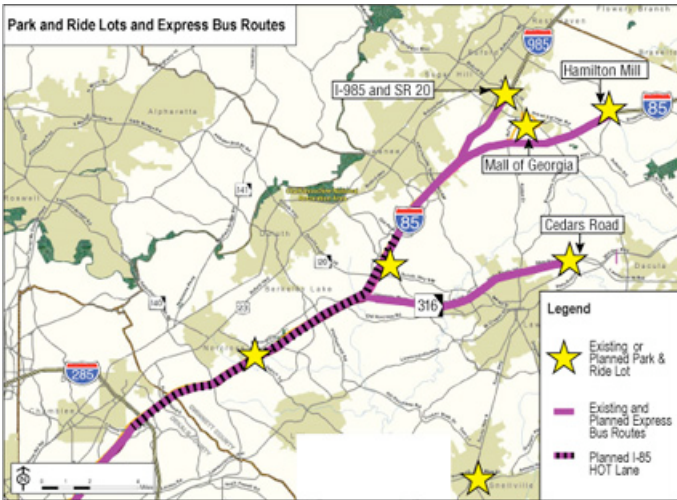
The project calls for the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) to use \$36 million of the project funds for transit enhancements including the purchase of 36 new passenger buses for seven new routes. The preliminary procurement process for the buses is already underway. New and enhanced park and ride facilities are also part of the program, which will help relieve congestion on the I-85 corridor.

Benita Dodd, Vice President of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, explained her enthusiasm for the project in an opinion editorial in the Dalton Daily Citizen, stating, "Growing challenges for the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority's popular express buses are its standing room only routes and getting stuck in the same interstate peak-hour traffic jams as the rest of traffic. Embracing public transit is easier when van pool and bus passengers get a toll-free trip in the HOT lane with the assurance of reliable and improved trip times."

GRTA's popular Xpress bus service will be added to the Mall of Georgia, with service expected to begin in April 2010. In addition, the I-985 and SR-20 park and ride lot will be expanded with 400 additional spaces to support new Xpress bus service to Midtown. The expanded lot is anticipated to open in July 2011.

In order to manage an orderly flow of buses in and out of downtown, the city of Atlanta, MARTA, and GRTA are collaborating on a Downtown Circulator Plan. ([Map of the proposed re-routing - 1.7mb](#)). The plan includes new routes, afternoon bus staging areas, and measures aimed at minimizing negative impacts to local traffic and neighborhoods.





[top](#)

HOT Lanes Are HOT News*

HOT lanes are a hot topic for reporters and editorial writers in communities around the U.S. where they have been implemented or are being considered.

The reporting has highlighted the benefits of HOT lanes as a congestion management tool. Initial skeptics of HOT lanes tend to support the concept after viewing data that suggests that the lane is used by all income groups.

Following are a few excerpts of HOT lane editorial comments from national and major city news organizations:

Minneapolis HOT Lane Opening Receives Enthusiastic Television Coverage

When a 12-mile stretch of HOT lanes opened in the Twin Cities, a local TV station provided extensive prime time coverage of the event including interviews with transportation experts and elected officials. Teamwork between agencies was cited as a factor in the project's successful implementation.



KSTP - Click image for video

Texas Experience Provides Road Map to Congestion Relief

**Georgia Public Policy Foundation, October 24, 2008,
by Chick Krautler, Director of the Atlanta Regional Commission**

A recent fact-finding mission to Texas, led by Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue, was an excellent opportunity for Georgia's state and regional transportation policy-makers to learn from folks who have made progress in attacking their congestion and mobility challenges through tolling, alternative funding and alternative project delivery. [more](#)

HOT Lanes Have Only Begun To Prove Worth

Tacoma News Tribune, Tacoma Washington, October 27, 2008, editorial by Kim Bradford

Data from the lane's first four months of operation are in, and the numbers undercut the claim that 167's high occupancy toll lanes are a special privilege for the rich.

Usage data suggests that HOT lanes are not "Lexus Lanes." They are more accurately called Ford fast tracks, or maybe Chevrolet expressways. Nearly half of the single drivers who chose to use the HOT lane were driving these two makes. [more](#)

Traffic idea is so good, it's totally HOT.

Boulder Daily Camera, May 18, 2003, Opinion-Editorial by Jon Caldera, president of the Independence Institute in Golden, CO

Ever notice how many folks cheat and drive alone in the carpool lane? Haven't you wanted to? After the conversion to HOT lanes in San Diego, the violation rate dropped by well over 60 percent. The cheaters now pay.

HOT lanes are a win-win idea. The carpool lane finally gets used to capacity, and cars get out of the general-purpose lanes, freeing up traffic there. Carpoolers and bus riders are unaffected, since the lanes are congestion free, thanks to the variable pricing.. [more](#)

**The above links provide information about successful HOT implementations in other states. The ideas and concepts discussed are being shared as information only and do not necessarily represent or reflect the policies, practices, plans or operations of Georgia's proposed I-85 HOT Lane project.*

[top](#)

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