Project Overview

What is the I-85 Express Lanes Extension Project?
The I-85 Express Lanes Extension Project adds one lane in each direction on I-85 from just north of Old Peachtree Road in Gwinnett County to Hamilton Mill Road. The additional lanes are dynamically priced express lanes. South of I-985, the new lane was constructed by widening the existing eight-lane mainline. North of I-985, the express lane is located within the median along the four-lane I-85 section.

How does the I-85 Express Lanes Extension work?
This project adds a new express lane in each direction from just north of Old Peachtree Road to Hamilton Mill Road that allows eligible carpoolers, transit, vanpool, and motorcycles to use the lane for free, while allowing vehicles with one or two passengers to use the express lane for a fee. In order to use the express lanes, drivers must register and have a Peach Pass transponder through the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA).

Is there signage directing motorists where to enter and exit the lanes?
Yes, motorists in the general purpose lanes (lane for use by the general public without restrictions or tolls) are directed to express lane entrance points in the same manner as the existing express lanes. Motorists already traveling in the express lanes are directed to local exits in the same manner as the existing express lanes.

What was the schedule for the project?
Construction began in July 2016, and the express lanes opened to traffic on November 3, 2018.

What vehicles are able to use the I-85 Express Lanes Extension?
All vehicles with two axles and six wheels or less are able to use the express lanes if they register for and obtain a Peach Pass. Registered transit, vanpools, and emergency vehicles may use the express lanes and are exempt from paying a fee.

What benefits do the I-85 Express Lanes Extension provide?
Express lanes offer more reliable trip times, improve traffic flow, and provide another travel option for motorists and transit customers. The I-85 Express Lanes Extension also accommodates the rapid growth in the region. Transit providers, registered vanpools, and carpools of three or more people are able to travel in the lanes cost-free.

Who owns and operates the I-85 Express Lanes Extension?
Georgia DOT managed the development of the I-85 Express Lanes Extension with the Design-Build Team, C.W. Matthews Contracting Co. and ARCADIS, who was responsible for the design and construction of the project. Georgia DOT is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the roadway. Operation of the pricing aspects of the lanes, including all customer service functions related to the Peach Pass system, is managed by SRTA.

LEGEN

LEGEND:
Express Lanes
Northbound Access
Southbound Access
Map is not to scale

Hamilton Mill Road
Gravel Springs Road
Buford Drive
Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road
Old Peachtree Road

Limits of Existing Express Lanes

Are there other express lanes projects?
Yes, the I-85 Express Lanes Extension is part of the larger Georgia Express Lanes system, a network of express lanes that run alongside existing interstates in some of Georgia.
the most congested corridors around metro Atlanta. Additional Georgia Express Lanes include the existing I-85 Express Lanes, the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes, and the I-75 South Metro Express Lanes.

How are toll rates determined?
As demand for use of the express lanes increases, the price to use the lanes rises to ensure the optimal number of cars can continue utilizing the lanes. Motorists can see the posted toll amount before they enter the express lanes and are able to decide whether or not they want to use them. Fees on the I-85 Express Lanes Extension are collected electronically (no toll booths) so drivers do not have to slow down or stop to pay tolls. SRTA sets rates and collect tolls. For more information, please visit www.PeachPass.com.

How was the project funded?
The project was funded through an 80% federal and 20% state match. The project was also funded through toll revenue bonds.

How is money raised through tolling being used?
Dynamic pricing revenue pays for the project’s capital costs and express lanes operation, maintenance, renewal, and replacement costs.

What is done with any excess revenue?
Any revenue above the amount required to fund ongoing operation and maintenance of the I-85 Express Lanes Extension will be made available for other transportation purposes.

Project Delivery Method

How was the project delivered?
The project followed a Design-Build delivery method. Design-Build combines preconstruction services with construction services into a single contract. Design-Build projects allow the contractor to participate in the project’s design in an effort to reduce costs, improve communication, and expedite project delivery.

Who was the Design-Build team for I-85 Express Lanes Extension?
The Design-Build team for the project was C.W. Matthews Contracting Co. and ARCADIS. The project contract was awarded in July 2015. Project construction started in July 2016.

Using The Express Lanes

How are fees collected?
Express lanes don’t use toll booths. Instead, all fees are collected electronically through the Peach Pass transponder, a small electronic sticker that adheres to a vehicle’s windshield. This technology, already in use on the existing I-85 Express Lanes, allows travelers to maintain roadway speed at all times. Complete information on the Peach Pass is available at www.PeachPass.com.

How do drivers obtain a Peach Pass to use the express lanes?
Users of all Georgia Express Lanes, including the I-85 Express Lanes Extension, can visit www.PeachPass.com or call the Peach Pass Customer Service Center at 1-855-PCH-PASS (724-7277) to open a Peach Pass account and register their vehicle(s). One Peach Pass account can have up to 10 registered vehicles. However, each vehicle must have its own Peach Pass transponder. As an added benefit, Georgia has also partnered with Florida and North Carolina to allow travelers to use the Peach Pass with tolling systems in these states. In the coming years, the number of states in which the Peach Pass is interoperable will continue to expand.

Project Funding

What was the cost of the I-85 Express Lanes Extension Project?
The total project final cost was $178 million.
How much does a Peach Pass cost?
The Peach Pass transponder is free when obtained from SRTA. A minimum prepayment of $20 and a credit or debit card for future payment is required to set up a Peach Pass account. Walgreens and CVS stores charge a convenience fee for the Pay n GO! Peach Pass.

Is there an option to obtain a Peach Pass without a credit or debit card?
Yes, the Pay n GO! Peach Pass is available for customers who wish to pay with cash rather than an assigned debit or credit card. No personal or vehicle information is required for this purchase. Much like a prepaid calling card, the Pay n GO! Peach Pass can be purchased and reloaded with cash for toll credits ($20-$500) at participating CVS and Walgreens stores. The Pay n GO! Peach Pass Starter Kit includes a Peach Pass transponder and a Reload Card. There is a one-time fee of $2.50 when purchasing the starter kit. Each time money is applied to the reload card, a $1.50 convenience fee is included.

Incident Management
What happens if a vehicle stalls, breaks down, or has an accident in the I-85 Express Lanes Extension?
A shoulder adjacent to the express lane is available in designated locations along the corridor so that drivers can safely pull out of the lanes in the event of a vehicle stall, break down, or crash. Cameras that communicate with NaviGAtor and the Transportation Management Center (TMC) are located along the express lanes. TMC operators monitor both the express lanes and general purpose lanes in the corridor for incidents. Georgia DOT HERO vehicles patrol the lanes at all times.

Transit
What transit systems are allowed to use the I-85 Express Lanes Extension?
Public transit providers that operate in this corridor, including Xpress and state-registered vanpools, are able to use express lanes free of charge. Any additional state or county transit agencies that expand or introduce operations within the area and register will also have access to the lanes.

Are transit riders required to pay anything beyond normal fares on routes that access express lanes?
No, there are no additional costs to access the lanes for public transit riders, state-registered vanpools, or the public transit providers.

For more information and general FAQs about the Georgia Express Lanes system, please visit:
www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL.