

The Northwest Corridor Express Lanes Project Newsletter



PROJECT MILESTONE: Northwest Corridor Express Lanes Finishes First Year Strong

One year ago, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) broke ground on its largest roadway construction project to date: the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes. Governor Nathan Deal joined a large gathering of state and local officials to celebrate the kick-off of this major express lanes project, a critical piece of a strategic transportation plan to provide options for more reliable travel times and benefits to transit and vanpool customers in some of the region's busiest thoroughfares.

The Northwest Corridor Express Lanes will feature thirty miles of dedicated express toll lanes along Interstate 75 and 575 in Cobb and Cherokee counties, currently one of the most congested areas of traffic for the entire metro Atlanta region.

Now, one year later, officials and project staff are excited about the construction progress already made.

"Once completed, the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes will be a valuable option for travelers in our region," says Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry. "I am very pleased to see the project progressing at this quick pace."



Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry (left) and Georgia DOT Project Manager for the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes Project, John Hancock (right) underneath the mile-long express lanes bridge that is currently under construction at Canton Road Connector.

Ongoing Construction Activities:

Bridges

- 39 bridges total; 8 will be completed in 2015 and another 22 will be under construction by the end of 2015
- 219 spans for a total bridge length of 5.29 miles
- 35 of 219 spans complete (16%)
- 76 of 241 bridge columns complete (32%)

Roadway and Walls

- 1 new ramp completed; 5 ramps currently under construction
- 2.5 out of 10 miles of express lane paved with asphalt in median of I-575

- 63 total retaining walls; 7 walls completed, 6 walls are currently under construction
- 20 of 63 walls expected to be complete by end of 2015
- 12% of project walls are complete
- Last wall scheduled for completion January 2017

Upcoming Construction for 2015

- Start construction on 18 more retaining walls
- Start construction on 3 toll zones
- Start installation of overhead signs
- 45 sound barrier walls; construction starts October 2015



Fall 2014: bridge construction at Canton Road Connector



Fall 2015: bridge construction at Canton Road Connector

Northwest Corridor Project - A Closer Look:

Bridge Deck Construction

With construction on half of the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes' bridges well underway, commuters can now glimpse ongoing bridge deck operations. Bridge deck work marks a pivotal point in the construction process, since the decks are the flat concrete beds that house the elevated segments of roadway driven on by motorists.

So, how does bridge deck construction work? First, piers have to be constructed, as they are the foundations for each bridge. Next, large pre-fabricated beams made of either steel or concrete are set on top of the piers to connect

the length in between. Once they are set atop the piers, the beams are secured together with steel cross frames and form a bridge span.

After that, protective platforms are installed to create a safe and level working area to continue deck operations. Metal decking, or steel sheets, are placed between each of the beams that make up a bridge span and are welded or securely attached to the beams on each side to create a solid base for the bridge deck. A cage of steel bars is then placed over the metal decking and concrete is poured.

The bridge deck concrete is poured using a specialized piece of equipment called a screed

that spreads and levels the concrete evenly across each bridge span. This process is repeated for each bridge span and concludes once concrete has hardened.

Want to learn more about bridge construction progress? Follow the construction updates on Georgia DOT's [Northwest Corridor Express Lanes page](#).



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Frequently Asked Questions: Express Lanes Safety

When it comes to the Georgia Express Lanes, public safety is a top priority. We've answered some of your questions on the lanes' and gates' operation. Read on to learn more!

A: A combination of warning and barrier resistance gates at every express lanes access point will be in place, as well as warning gates at every express lanes exit ramp. In addition, there will be 24-hour full video coverage of the entire Northwest Corridor Express Lanes system.

The reversal schedule for the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes will be made available before the opening of the lanes to traffic in spring 2018. The lanes are currently prescribed to have the same schedule on weekends as on weekdays. However, it is possible the lanes' schedule may be adjusted to account for special events or incidents that impact traffic flow.

Q: Will emergency access be in the travel lanes or just at the toll gate entrances?

A: Emergency responders will be able to access the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes at nine emergency barrier gate locations, each with 42-foot wide openings, in addition to the toll gate entrances at the express lane interchanges and open slip ramps. The system has been designed to ensure there is no more than 2.5 miles between accesspoints for emergency responders.



Rendering of entry gate for the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes

Q: How will motorists be prevented from going in the wrong direction when the lanes are reversed?

Q: Will the express lanes be in operation 24 hours a day?

A: Yes, express lanes will be open 24 hours a day, with the exception of a one- to two-hour layover periods between peak travel times to allow for maintenance and Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO) vehicles to clear the lanes of any vehicles and debris prior to reversal of the lanes.

The project team continues to meet with local emergency responders to develop processes and procedures for responding to any incidents in the lanes once they open to traffic. You can learn more on the Georgia DOT [Northwest Corridor Express Lanes page](#).

Want to Learn More? Invite Us to Your Group!



NWC Project outreach presentation at Kennesaw City Council Meeting in September 2015.

Community residents are a big part of the Express Lanes building process. The Northwest Corridor Project team is committed to keeping the community and its commuters informed on construction activities, traffic impacts and safe use of the express lanes when they open to traffic in 2018.

Public meetings and presentations are a key part of keeping the public informed on key points of the project. Northwest Corridor project representatives have had the opportunity to present to various community stakeholders and organizations, including city officials, homeowner associations and emergency responder units throughout the project corridor. But there's still a lot of work to be done.

Will you help us spread the word about the project and answer your community's questions? If you would like to request a GDOT representative to present to your organization, please let us know.

Please email us at Northwestcorridor@dot.ga.gov or call (678) 486-3767. Questions and requests are welcome.

Stay Connected!

To subscribe to weekly traffic alerts and our quarterly newsletter, please email us at northwestcorridor@dot.ga.gov.

Questions? Call us: 678-486-3767

For regular project updates visit: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL>

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Northwest Corridor Project Photos



Aerial view of ongoing bridge construction at I-75 and Barrett Parkway north of the I-75/I-575 interchange (August 2015)



Aerial view of construction of mile-long bridge and retaining wall at I-75 and Canton Road (August 2015)