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City and State Officials Urge Motorists to Consider Travel Alternatives

Increasing Congestion and Travel Times Expected Next Week; Individuals and Businesses Should Do Their Part to Minimize Rush Hour Congestion

ATLANTA – In the eight days since the I-85 bridge fire, Georgia motorists have taken advantage of a variety of commute options, helping to reduce congestion.

With the end of spring break, traffic volume in the Atlanta metro area is expected to increase by as much as 20 percent beginning Monday, April 10. Because of this, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed are joining the Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) in urging both individuals and businesses to explore ways they can work differently.

“Georgia is an international business center, home to Fortune 500 companies and some of the most innovative and forward-thinking organizations in the world,” said Gov. Deal. “The challenge posed by the closure of I-85 is one we can overcome if we all plan ahead and take advantage of the options available.”

According to Georgia DOT, the expected increase in traffic volume next week has the potential to increase average travel times by at least 30 percent throughout metro Atlanta, drastically lowering the average speed on area roads due to increased congestion.

Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry advised employers that allowing telecommuting is the best way to keep cars off of the roads. He also encouraged businesses to consider allowing employees to alter their work schedules to avoid travel during the most congested times of day, 5-10 a.m. and 2:30-7 p.m.

“Both telecommuting and staggered work schedules help remove single-occupant vehicles from roadways during peak times, which contributes to our goal of reducing congestion as much as possible,” said McMurry. “If we all work together, we can all get where we need to go in a relatively reasonable time frame.”

Public transit like [MARTA](#) or [GRTA Express Bus Service](#) are easy and efficient options to reach and travel through the metro Atlanta area. The I-85 corridor has frequent and reliable train service via

MARTA's rapid rail network and 38 stations around the metro area, directly serving major business centers north and south of the I-85 reconstruction.

"We need to remember how we handled the Centennial Olympic Games – the closest comparison we have to what we're facing over the next several weeks," said Mayor Reed. "During those two weeks, every employer, community and individual adjusted their behaviors. We should take the same approach in response to the Interstate 85 collapse, by taking advantage of telecommuting, MARTA, and ride-share options like Uber, uberPOOL and Lyft. Atlantans know how to persevere. We can pull together, help each other through the next several weeks, and demonstrate to the world that Atlanta is resilient, nimble, and undeterred."

Georgia DOT is offering resources to help motorists plan their commutes:

- Visit www.dot.ga.gov for the most up-to-date maps and information on road closures and alternate routes
- Visit www.511ga.org or dial 511 for routing information or to speak to an operator who can assist
- Visit [Georgia Commute Options](#) for additional resources and information about available cash incentives for using commuting options
- Visit www.itsmarta.com for MARTA routes and schedules
- Visit www.grta.org for information on GRTA express routes

The Atlanta Regional Commission is providing [alternate route options](#) to commercial vehicles and large trucks to help them get through the region. These types of vehicles are also encouraged to only travel through the metro area during overnight hours and take advantage of I-285 to bypass the city.

"Georgia DOT is working in concert with many state and metro Atlanta transportation agencies and civic organizations to respond to the travel needs of Georgia's businesses and commuters," said McMurry. "We will continue monitoring conditions and providing information to assist the traveling public and keep Georgia moving."

Georgia DOT's goal is to ensure replacement of the I-85 Bridge as quickly as possible. The Department has committed to a delivery date of June 15 to reopen this critical section of infrastructure to traffic.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. For more information on Georgia DOT, please visit www.dot.ga.gov. You also may follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/GDOTEastTraffic>).

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