



For Immediate Release:
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I-285/GA 400 Interchange Advances, New Scenic Byway Approved at State Transportation Board Meeting

ATLANTA – The State Transportation Board (STB) today passed a joint resolution enabling the I-285/GA 400 interchange reconstruction project in Atlanta to move forward, and approved designation of the Historic Dixie Highway in Southwest Georgia as the state’s 15th Georgia Scenic Byway. The Board also welcomed news on the significant progress Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has made on the new and renovated Interstate Welcome Centers and Rest Areas across the state.

The Board approved a joint resolution between Georgia DOT and the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) to move forward the interchange reconstruction project at I-285/GA400. The resolution authorizes the project to advance; authorizes the Department to manage the project and act as SRTA’s agent; and authorizes GDOT to make funds available to the project subject to annual appropriations up to \$907 million. The project is currently in the procurement stage with four shortlisted teams.

“The \$1 Billion I-285/SR 400 Interchange reconstruction project is the state’s highest transportation infrastructure improvement priority and its most expensive road project ever,” said Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell McMurry. “We appreciate the efforts of our partners including the Federal Highway Administration, the State Road and Tollway Authority, the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Perimeter Community Improvement Districts for their hard work and commitment to move this project along at such a fast pace.”

The Historic Dixie Highway Scenic Byway—Southwest Georgia’s first Scenic Byway and the state’s first designation in five years, runs 62 miles from Albany to Thomasville. The route primarily follows Old Highway 3 through the downtowns of Albany, Baconton, Camilla, Pelham, Meigs, Ochlocknee and Thomasville. Sponsored by the City of Pelham, the Byway will be included on the official state map, and added to the GDOT Scenic Byways website. It brings the total mileage of Georgia Scenic Byways to 650.

The Board also received an update on the progress of upgrades to all welcome centers and rest areas across the state. The Savannah area welcome center is a \$10.2 million full replacement project, scheduled for completion in June 2016. The remaining eight welcome centers are split into a northern group and a southern group. The northern properties in Augusta, Ringgold, Lavonia and Tallapoosa will be renovated for a total of \$2.2 million with an estimated completion of May 2016. The remaining four southern centers in Kingsland, Columbus, West Point and Lake Park are being advertised for bids this week by the Georgia State Finance and Investment Commission. The work on these locations is estimated to take 6-12 months from issuance of the notice to proceed to the contractor.

The 17 rest areas have been fully evaluated for needed improvements and associated costs to bring the facilities to a state of good and functional conditions. Final construction plans on all rest areas will be completed within the next month.

No taxpayer money is involved in the welcome center and rest area projects. Funds come from advertising revenue collected from the STB’s interstate exit sign Logo Program.

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“This is an exciting day for Georgia,” STB Board Chairman Don Grantham said. “Significant progress is being made on major projects that will have statewide impact, ensuring that travelers have safe and functioning facilities as they travel the interstates, and we are preserving the beauty of our highways at the same time.”

***DriveAlert ArriveAlive** calls attention to an alarming increase in roadway fatalities across Georgia, many resulting from preventable crashes and distracted driving. **DriveAlert ArriveAlive** implores motorists to buckle up; stay off the phone and no texting; and drive alert. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/DAAA. #ArriveAliveGA For more information about Georgia DOT, visit www.dot.ga.gov. Please follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT) (www.facebook.com/GeorgiaDOT) and [Twitter](http://twitter.com/gadepoftrans) (<http://twitter.com/gadepoftrans>).*

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