

## I-75 South Metro Express Lanes: On Track for Opening in 2017



Pictured above: Construction of the new express lanes in the center median area of I-75

Construction of the I-75 South Metro Express Lanes continues to make significant progress heading into the New Year. As of January 2016, the I-75 South Metro Express Lanes project is nearing 50% completion and is on track for its scheduled opening in early 2017.

Ongoing tasks include:

- New pavement
- Drainage structures
- Sound walls
- Sign structures
- Bridges

Coming in early 2016:

- Electrical tolling component installation and programming throughout the year

The Georgia Department of Transportation sincerely thanks all travelers and commuters for their patience and alertness in the construction areas along our interstate highways. Georgia DOT is committed to minimizing construction impacts on the public as much as possible. To stay up to date on the Georgia Express Lanes' progress, visit Georgia DOT's I-75 South Metro Express Lanes page, where you can view the project schedule, subscribe to traffic alerts, and read background info on the project at [www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL](http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL).

Pictured right: View west of the Jonesboro Road access to the express lanes

### I-75 South Metro Express Lanes: Fast Facts





## Project Progress!



MSE wall for the Jonesboro access ramp



Sound wall construction on the southbound section at Walt Stephens Road

## Update: Mt. Carmel Bridge Halfway to Completion

Reconstruction of the Mt. Carmel Bridge, which was closed in September 2015, is now 50% complete. Mid-November 2015 saw the installation of new bridge beams, marking a significant structural milestone for the project. The new Mt. Carmel Bridge will include wider 14-foot lanes and sidewalks.

Mt. Carmel Road remains closed to through traffic; however, local traffic is able to travel on Mt. Carmel to access neighborhoods. Non-local traffic should continue to follow these detours:

- Traveling east on Mt. Carmel Road: Turn left onto Mill Road, then head north. Turn right onto Jonesboro Road, crossing over I-75.
- Traveling west on Jonesboro Road: Cross over I-75 and turn left onto Mill Road, then head south.

For more information on the Mt. Carmel Bridge closure, visit the Georgia DOT I-75 South Metro Express Lanes page.



Mt. Carmel Bridge construction from December 2015

## Featured Partner SRTA: Choose a More Reliable Commute with Peach Pass

Stop-and-go traffic is a challenge for Metro Atlanta motorists, especially during morning and afternoon rush hours. But relief is on the way. This time next year, Georgia will be gearing up to open the I-75 South Metro Express Lanes, two new reversible express lanes that will run northbound and southbound through Henry and Clayton Counties along Interstate 75.

Access to the Express Lanes will require motorists to register for a Peach Pass account. The Peach Pass is a small electronic transponder or sticker that adheres to a vehicle's inside windshield. This transponder is connected to a Peach Pass customer's debit or credit card and will automatically deduct tolls from their Peach Pass account when using the I-75 South Metro Express Lanes, similar to how it works on the I-85 Express Lanes in Gwinnett County. Tolls will go up or down based on travel demand.

Though the Peach Pass account registration process is the same, there are a few differences between the new I-75 South Metro Express Lanes and the existing I-85 Express Lanes:

1. The new Express Lanes will be newly constructed lanes and will serve as added capacity to the existing general purpose lanes.
2. The new Express Lanes will be reversible, meaning that both lanes will go in the same direction and will switch directions according to the time of day (northbound in the AM and southbound in the PM).
3. The new Express Lanes will be separated by a concrete barrier, unlike the I-85 Express Lanes in Gwinnett County that are barrier-free, and allow entry/exit only at certain, gate-controlled access points.
4. All motorists, including motorcyclists and carpoolers, will pay a toll on the new Express Lanes. Only transit buses will access the lanes for free.

Christopher Tomlinson, Executive Director at the State Road & Tollway Authority (SRTA) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) likes the idea of offering more choices that allow motorists to take control over their commute. "The I-75 South Metro Express Lanes will provide a convenient, reliable option to bypass traffic congestion south of Atlanta," said Tomlinson. "And by 2019, your Peach Pass will take you even further, with more than 50 miles of newly constructed express lanes across metro Atlanta's most congested interstate corridors."

In addition to the opening of the I-75 South Metro Express Lanes (12 miles), the Northwest Corridor Express Lanes (30 miles) are slated to open in 2018, and the I-85 Express Lanes Extension (10 miles) will open in 2019. No matter which roadway you choose, motorists will be required to open a Peach Pass account for access to the new toll facilities.

There are several ways to sign-up for a Peach Pass account:

1. Online at [www.PeachPass.com](http://www.PeachPass.com).
2. Phone at 1-855-PCH-PASS (724-7277).
3. Walk-Up Centers located at 47 Trinity Avenue in Downtown Atlanta or at the Department of Driver Services location on Hurricane Shoals Road in Lawrenceville. More walk-up centers are set to open in the near future in the I-75 South Corridor.
4. *And coming soon . . .* Via the Peach Pass GO! Mobile App.

The Peach Pass marketing and outreach campaign will begin to ramp up in spring 2016. For more information on Peach Pass and the latest news and events, visit [www.peachpass.com](http://www.peachpass.com).

Pictured below: Peach Pass Walk-Up Center





## Resolve to Drive Alert, Arrive Alive in 2016

While project construction aims to have the smallest possible impact to ongoing traffic, Georgia Express Lanes construction is an active work site requiring drivers to stay alert. Reducing speed in construction zones and keeping an eye out for construction barrels and workers on the shoulder are great ways to do your part to make I-75 safer in the coming year.

What else can you do to be safer on the roads? Put away the cell phone — and encourage your friends to do the same. Distracted driving accounts for a startling number of Georgia traffic collisions, and Georgia's traffic fatalities total is on the rise.

In 2015 there were over 1,200 roadway fatalities in Georgia. The I-75 South Metro Express Team is committed to helping reduce this statistic and spreading awareness on safer driving habits. We invite you to join us in this effort.

Here are a few winter driving tips to help you travel safer. Please share with family and friends! Let's take action and pledge to drive alert to #ArriveAliveGA in 2016.

- *Preparedness is key:* Make sure your car is prepared for cold temperatures and wintry conditions including ice and snow.
- *Drive Alert:* Avoid driving if tired or fatigued. Being well rested and alert before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks.
- *Exercise caution:* Do not drive at excess speeds or use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).
- *Be aware of roadway conditions:* Be cautious on bridges and overpasses as they are commonly the first areas to become icy.
- *Delay trips if necessary:* Watch weather reports prior to a long-distance drive or before driving in isolated areas. Delay trips when especially bad weather is expected.

## Contact Information

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## GDOT in the Community

GDOT project staff got in the holiday spirit as they provided project information at the annual Christmas in the Grove festival held in Locust Grove, Georgia on December 5th. Visitors at the event were able to stop by the express lanes booth to learn more about the project and pick up a fact sheet. Thank you to everyone who asked questions and shared their thoughts on the project.

If you would like to request a Georgia DOT representative to present to your organization, please let us know by emailing [I75ExpressLanes@dot.ga.gov](mailto:I75ExpressLanes@dot.ga.gov) or calling 404.631.1248.



Project Manager Sherl White is ready to discuss the project with citizens at Christmas in the Grove.



Project Manager Sherl White discusses the I-75 South Metro project with a local Henry County radio station that wanted to learn more about the construction schedule.