



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Press Release

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STATE MOVES FORWARD ON I-75/575 NORTHWEST CORRIDOR

ATLANTA – The much-needed Northwest Corridor transportation improvement project on Interstate Highways 75 and 575 in Cobb and Cherokee counties will move forward optimizing both public and private sector resources, Governor Nathan Deal announced today. The Governor and Department of Transportation officials said contract work will begin next year and be complete by 2018.

“This is a vital commuting and logistics corridor,” Governor Deal noted. “Adding new lanes – and the new capacity they will provide – is critical to a continued high quality of life in Metropolitan Atlanta and to sustaining further economic growth for the region and for all of Georgia.”

The project will build two new managed lanes along the west side of I-75 between its interchanges with I-285 and I-575. The lanes will be separated from the existing interstate and will be reversible so that both will carry traffic southbound during morning commute hours and northbound in the evenings. Above the I-575 interchange, one new reversible lane will be added in the I-75 center median to Hickory Grove Road and a similar new I-575 lane will extend to Sixes Road. The total length of the project is approximately 30 miles. A variable-rate toll, based on traffic volume, will be assessed for access to the lanes.

State Transportation Board Chairman Rudy Bowen said Georgia DOT will build the project as a Design, Build, Finance undertaking within the Department’s Public Private Partnership (P3) program. In this approach, work is expedited as a private firm or consortium of several companies is retained essentially to simultaneously design and construct the project. The private partner also will be responsible for funding a portion of the project’s cost.

Governor Deal and Chairman Bowen noted, though, that the State will:

- Retain absolute and total control of the lanes both during and after construction;
- Will alone determine tolling rate scenarios; and
- Will alone determine how and when monies are to be repaid to private partner(s).

“Earlier this year, I asked Chairman Bowen and (Georgia DOT) Commissioner (Keith) Golden to develop a better approach for moving ahead with this project,” Governor Deal said. “We need to make these improvements to our system but we also have a responsibility to do so in a manner that best protects the sovereign interests of the State – insuring that Georgia forever retains control of its assets, their use and their future development.

“This does that; it is a much better way forward.”

The Northwest Corridor project is estimated to cost approximately \$950 million. Earlier this year, the Georgia General Assembly designated \$300 million of state motor fuel taxes carried over from previous years to the project. The State has been approved to apply for up to \$270 million in a low-interest Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan from the federal government and Georgia DOT has programmed \$200 million from its construction budget. The private sector partner will be asked to provide 10-20 percent of the project cost, to be repaid by the State.

The Georgia DOT is working with the Federal Highway Administration to obtain the environmental clearance and expects a Record of Decision (ROD) in January 2013. The Department intends to conduct briefings with interested private sector firms in the coming weeks and issue a request for qualifications in June. From those responses, qualified firms will be selected for a shortlist of vendors who will receive a request for proposals later this year.

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