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91°F

Diverging diamond interchanges at Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Pleasant Hill advance

Lawrenceville, Ga., (July 20, 2010) – Plans for short-term improvements at two I-85 interchanges in Gwinnett are moving into the design phase after the Board of Commissioners approved agreements with two Community Improvement Districts (CID) on Tuesday. Both interchanges will use the diverging diamond design that improves traffic flow on existing bridges by rerouting vehicles to make left turns possible without waiting for oncoming traffic.

Gwinnett DOT Director Brian Allen said, “This innovative work is entirely funded by SPLOST and CID money. It’s much less expensive than traditional interchange reconstruction because we’re using the existing bridges in a new way.”

The County’s Citizens Project Selection Committee recommended using \$8.6 million of 2009 SPLOST sales tax funds for longer-term interchange reconstruction projects. The Gwinnett Village CID will contribute \$1 million and the engineering designs for the Jimmy Carter Boulevard/I-85 interchange. The Gwinnett Place CID will do the same for the Pleasant Hill Road interchange. The County will buy any necessary right-of-way and will manage construction in cooperation with the state Department of Transportation.

Allen said, “The long-term solution is a complete overhaul of these interchanges that will require federal financial assistance in addition to the CID matching funds and County SPLOST dollars that are already approved and budgeted.”

For now, however, the diverging diamond interchanges will require traffic to drive briefly on the left side of the overpasses, allowing both right and left turns to flow freely onto interstate entrance ramps. Board Chairman Charles Bannister said, “I appreciate the CIDs for working cooperatively with the County to promote an innovative solution like the diverging-diamond concept as a cost-effective way to reduce traffic congestion and look forward to the results.”

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