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# DOT gives go-ahead for diverging diamond


Concept to be put on Pleasant Hill bridge

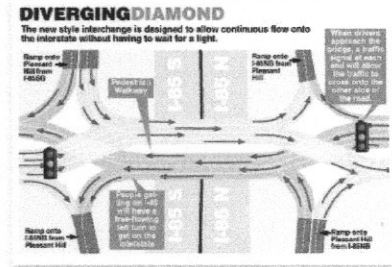
DULUTH — Diverging diamonds are bringing a sparkle to officials hoping to relieve traffic in Gwinnett. PDF of the planned diamond inside


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**DULUTH** — Diverging diamonds are bringing a sparkle to officials hoping to relieve traffic in Gwinnett.

The Georgia Department of Transportation gave the go-ahead to a concept plan to use the innovative diverging diamond design at Pleasant Hill Road's interstate crossing. The department gave its approval for the design at Jimmy Carter Boulevard about a month ago.

The design, first seen in the United States two years ago, would have cars shift to the opposite side of the road on the bridge, allowing right turns onto the interstate instead of traffic backing up on the bridge because of drivers waiting to turn left. Officials with local community improvement districts say the concept could add 10 years to the life of the bridges.

"The CID's top priority is rebuilding this bridge to dramatically improve traffic flow and safety," said Leo Wiener, chairman of the Gwinnett Place CID. "We greatly appreciate the strong leadership and emphasis that Gwinnett County and Georgia transportation authorities have placed on the Pleasant Hill Road DDI. They recognize the importance of this project to the CID and our county's central business district."

Construction is expected to begin late this year or early next year on the bridges.

Earlier this week, officials learned that the Jimmy Carter and Pleasant Hill bridge replacement requests were not forwarded on as part of an unconstrained project list for a proposed regional sales tax. But Gwinnett Village CID Director Chuck Warbington said officials understand the logic on leaving them off the list, especially since the diverging-diamond interchanges will be complete just prior to the vote.

"I understand why and it makes a lot of sense," Warbington said of the argument that voters would be turned off from a new project since one had recently been completed. "A confused voter is not a good voter. ...We'll find other money to make it happen."

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