

GOVERNMENT

Diverging Diamonds to Relieve Traffic Congestion

Redesign proposed for I-85 interchanges at Pleasant Hill Road, Jimmy Carter Blvd.

By Faye Edmundson February 21, 2011

Gwinnett and Duluth residents frustrated over the traffic congestion at the Interstate 85/Pleasant Hill Road interchange may find the going easier in the future. Reconstructing the interchange from a conventional diamond into a "diverging-diamond" configuration has been proposed to improve traffic flow. The diverging diamond allows drivers to cross over to the "opposite" side of the road.

The Georgia Department of Transportation, Gwinnett County Department of Transportation and Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID) invite the public to an informational open house (<http://duluth.patch.com/events/open-house-on-the-diverging-diamond-interchange-ddi>) on the diverging-diamond interchange (DDI) from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 24, at the Gwinnett Place Marriott, 1775 Pleasant Hill Road, in Duluth.

Representatives from the three agencies will informally present designs and displays, answer questions and gather public input.

The Gwinnett Village CID will join GDOT and Gwinnett DOT in sponsoring an open house (<http://duluth.patch.com/events/open-house-by-gwinnett-village-cid-georgia-department-of-transportation-and-gwinnett-department-of-transportation>) from 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, March 1, on turning the I-85/Jimmy Carter Boulevard interchange into a diverging diamond. It will take place in the Gwinnett Village CID offices, Suite 122, 5855 Jimmy Carter Blvd., in Norcross.

In announcing the open houses, Gwinnett County Department of Transportation Director Brian Allen said the DDI projects are much-needed improvements that should increase road capacity and ease traffic congestion in two of the county's most heavily traveled areas. He also applauded the collaboration between GDOT, Gwinnett DOT and the two CIDs on the projects. DDIs use existing infrastructure to curb costs and speed up project completion time. Both conversions would be funded by SPLOST and CID money, Allen said.

The interstate bridges at Pleasant Hill Road and Jimmy Carter Boulevard would be among Georgia's first DDI locations. Nationwide, there currently are five operational DDIs.

The Pleasant Hill Road DDI is expected to significantly reduce delays during peak traffic use, according to Gwinnett Place CID Executive Director Joe Allen in the announcement. The CID also plans to incorporate artistic elements to make the bridge more visually distinctive and appealing, he said.

"The new design and enhanced appearance of the interchange will compliment the millions of dollars in new investments businesses are making in the district," Joe Allen said. "This is an exciting project that we believe will ultimately highlight the continued success and ongoing revitalization occurring throughout greater Gwinnett Place."

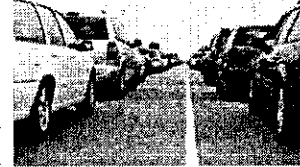
Construction is scheduled to start on the I-85/Pleasant Hill Road DDI project in the first quarter of 2012 with an anticipated four-month completion time, according to Joe Allen. "Work could start earlier," he said, "but we don't want to do anything that would disrupt holiday shopping at Gwinnett Place Mall."

"Relieving congestion has been one of our top priorities since the CID was formed in 2006," said Chuck Warbington, executive director of the Gwinnett Village CID, in the announcement. "The Jimmy Carter Boulevard and I-85 interchange is a major point of entry to our district, and our goal with the diverging diamond redesign is to enhance accessibility to local businesses and to reduce overall congestion in the corridor."

The I-85/Jimmy Carter Boulevard DDI project is scheduled to be finished by the end of 2011, according to Warbington's office.

Want to avoid gridlock?

Drive on the wrong side of the road!



PHOTOS (2)



Interested in a follow-up to this article?



SEE NEXT IN GOVERNMENT



COMMENTS (1)

Mike

4:20pm on Monday, February 21, 2011

I'd like to see this model in motion, I think it will work