

Construction won't interfere with mall shopping

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DULUTH -- By next holiday season, the route to Gwinnett Place Mall should be a breeze, with a new diverging-diamond interchange under construction expected to improve safety and efficiency along Pleasant Hill Road at Interstate 85.

But even as the work is under way, officials want shoppers to know the construction won't hamper the trip to Gwinnett's original shopping mecca this winter.

Knowing how important the holiday season is to the Gwinnett Place area, leaders from the community improvement district made sure to tie in restrictions on lane closures to make sure the path to the mall is as clear as possible.

"For most retailers, the holiday shopping season is the most important time of the year," CID Director Joe Allen said. "The CID does not want to have any lane closures so as not to disrupt our businesses during this busy time of the year or hinder our guests as they come into and travel around the area."

With thousands expected to crowd to shops this weekend, the state Department of Transportation has issued a furlough on lane closures throughout the state through Sunday. At Gwinnett Place, though, the lane closures won't happen again until after Christmas.

"During the holiday shopping season, traffic will be present," Allen said, adding that the CID has worked to lessen the impact as much as it can. "However, with the CID-funded community patrols to assist motorists, our traffic signal optimization program, our new sidewalks and streetscapes, we have put initiatives in place to lessen any traffic congestion."

In the end, the interchange project is hyped as a game-changer for traffic in the area and could mean a much improved flow for shoppers a year from now. But leaders know that Christmas is key in the business of retail. Shoppers come first this holiday season.

"From Best Buy to H.H. Gregg and Fry's Electronics to Macy's, JCPenney, Target, Kohl's, Toys R Us and Sears, and all the unique custom shops, there is something for everyone," Allen said. Gwinnett's central business district is your one-stop shop for everything on your holiday shopping list."

For updates on the interchange construction, go to www.facebook.com/GwinnettPlaceCID.