



## Frequently Asked Questions:

### **Project Overview:**

#### **Q: What are Express Lanes and how do they work?**

A: The Express Lanes are dedicated travel lanes that will run adjacent to the existing general purpose lanes that you already use on I-77. By converting the current High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to Express Lanes, more vehicles will travel more quickly through the north corridor. During each trip, motorists will be able to decide if they want to use the express lanes, the general purpose lanes or a combination of both to allow for a more efficient drive.

The I-77 Express Lanes are new to the Charlotte region. It is your choice to drive in the express lanes and pay a fee to use them to get through traffic faster. You can also choose to stay in the general purpose lanes, which remain adjacent to the new express lanes.

Transit vehicles, motorcycles, emergency vehicles and high occupancy vehicles with three or more people may use the lanes free of charge.

#### **Q: How long is each segment?**

A: Segments will vary in length from the shortest segment being just over one mile as you enter and exit the express lanes in the Uptown Charlotte area; to the longest segment running for approximately six miles between Sam Furr and Langtree Roads.

#### **Q: How do users benefit from using these lanes?**

A: All drivers will benefit from the I-77 Express Lanes. The express lanes provide users with an undeniable choice to access a reliable travel alternative based on their daily schedule and needs. Drivers choosing not to utilize the express lanes will also experience traffic congestion relief because of the new capacity added to the roadway.

#### **Q: Who is building the I-77 Express Lanes?**

A: I-77 Mobility Partners, LLC, an independent company of Cintra US, will design, build, operate and maintain the 26-mile I-77 Express Lanes Project as part of a public-private partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Cintra US, a leader in private-sector development of transportation based in Austin, Texas, manages more than \$14 billion in infrastructure projects in the United States.

### **Construction:**

#### **Q: How many new express lanes will be available for use?**

A: There will be two lanes in both directions from Charlotte to Exit 28 near Cornelius. One lane will run in either direction from Exit 28 to Exit 36 in Mooresville to minimize environmental impacts on Lake Norman.

#### **Q: How will construction of the express lanes affect traffic on I-77?**

A: Construction is scheduled to begin in or around summer 2015. During construction, all lanes of I-77 will remain open during the most travelled hours of the day. The Express Lanes will open in 2018.



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### **Q: Will local companies have a chance to get involved with building the I-77 Express Lanes?**

A: I-77 Mobility Partners makes it a practice of hiring local and regional contractors, subcontractors, designers, material suppliers and other vendors in the project area. During construction between 50-100 local firms will work on the project. The I-77 Express Lanes will support at least 8,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs, generating a positive impact on our local economy.

### **Q: How can I find updates about the construction process?**

A: Regular updates about construction and project progress will be available – **click here**. Users can also sign-up to receive the project's newsletter, which will include project updates beginning in Summer 2015.

### **Q: What happens to my info when I sign up to receive updates?**

A: The I-77 Mobility Partners does not sell our information to ANY LIST. Nor do we implement advertising in any of our online products and are expressly prohibited from doing so by the state. If you receive e-updates from us that include unsolicited advertisements, they could be from your internet provider or another party.

### **Q: When will the I-77 Express Lanes Project be complete?**

A: The Concession Agreement requires that the project be completed and open by Jan. 7, 2019.

## **Using the Express Lanes:**

### **Q: How will drivers access the I-77 Express Lanes?**

A: The merge lanes are designed with safety in mind, providing plenty of room for drivers to enter and exit the express lanes using at least six designated points.

### **Q: Do I have to use the I-77 Express Lanes?**

A: The I-77 Express Lanes are an option for travelers who want more reliable travel times. Motorists can determine for themselves if the time that they will save traveling on the express lanes is worth the money that they will pay to use them. Each individual driver can choose the combination of express lane and general purpose lane travel that is the best option for their trip.

### **Q: How will tractor-trailers benefit from the I-77 Express Lanes?**

A: The non-tolled General Purpose lanes will see relief as passenger vehicles choose to move to the express lanes. Other recently completed projects have seen 10 mph improvements in average speed in the non-tolled lanes. Additional relief will come as projects across North Carolina offer multiple corridors for through tractor-trailers that use I-77 to get from South Carolina to Virginia.



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### **Q: How will the I-77 Express Lanes operate during the event of an emergency?**

A: In the event of an emergency evacuation as declared by the governor, the new express lanes will add greater capacity to the I-77 corridor so that citizens can leave the area safely and quickly. During an emergency, NCDOT can suspend tolling immediately, independent of the timing of a formal emergency declaration. Emergency vehicles have unimpeded access to the express lanes at all times.

### **Q: How do I pay to use the express lanes?**

A: The I-77 Express Lanes are an electronic and cashless system. Drivers will have two ways that they can pay to use the lanes. The first option is to purchase a transponder from the North Carolina Turnpike Authority at [www.myNCQuickPass.com](http://www.myNCQuickPass.com). A transponder is a small radio frequency identification device that you can attach to your windshield. It emits a signal to readers attached to overhead toll gantries, which in turn, charge a toll to the user's account. You can set up an account with the North Carolina Turnpike Authority when you purchase your transponder.

If you don't have a transponder, do not worry. You can still use the express lanes. Video cameras will capture your license plate. You will receive a bill in the mail from the North Carolina Turnpike Authority with a slightly higher rate to cover the cost of collection.

### **Q: Will I-77 Mobility Partners have access to private information collected from express lanes users?**

A: No. Any customer information will be collected, stored and kept secure by the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (which operates under NCDOT). Drivers who choose to use the express lanes and choose to set up a NC Quick Pass account will do so using the same application currently used by existing NC Quick Pass customers. No social security numbers, medical information or birth dates will be collected by the Turnpike Authority, NCDOT, Cintra or I-77 Mobility Partners.

### **Q: Will the toll rates change as I go through the segments?**

A: Toll rates will fluctuate periodically based on the level of traffic in order to ensure that express lanes drivers travel at faster, more predictable rates of speed. As traffic levels and demand increase, the toll rate increases to keep vehicles moving. Once traffic volumes drop, the price goes down. Well in advance of each additional toll segment, a sign will display the price for further travel. Drivers can choose to continue in the express lanes and pay the toll fee for the next segment, or exit the lanes at no extra cost. It is important to note that every user will only pay the toll amount shown at the entry point even if the rate increases during the trip.



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### **Pricing:**

#### **Q: When will the toll rates be released?**

A: Rates will be released before the I-77 Express Lanes open. Several public meetings will occur to discuss toll rates and how to use the toll lanes prior to the first day of operations. The I-77 Express Lanes use congestion-management pricing to help manage traffic flow and provide faster, safer and more predictable travel for drivers who choose to use the lanes. Toll rates will fluctuate periodically based on the level of traffic in order to ensure that express lanes drivers travel at faster, more predictable rates of speed. As traffic levels and demand increase, the toll price increases to keep vehicles moving. Once traffic volumes drop, the price goes down. Vehicles with three or more occupants and public transit buses can use the express lanes at no charge.

#### **Q: Are there other projects in operation and what are their average toll rates?**

A: Each project is truly unique and tailored to the region in which it is developed. Because average toll rates depend on the number of drivers who choose to pay for the level of service and reliability offered by the express lanes at any given time, comparisons between projects with different population bases are not reliable.

#### **Q: What prevents the company managing the express lanes from charging whatever they want?**

A: There is no incentive for the private operator to set rates at prohibitively high levels because that would deter drivers from using the lanes. Toll rates will be determined by demand in order to maintain reliable travel.

### **Public-Private Partnerships (P3):**

#### **Q: What is a public-private partnership?**

A: A public-private partnership (P3) is a contractual agreement formed between a public agency and a private sector entity that allows for greater private sector participation in the delivery and financing of transportation projects, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

#### **Q: Why a private developer?**

A: Developing this project through a public-private partnership transfers the risk of future usage of the lanes to the private sector so that if the roadway underperforms, the public is protected. The public-private partnership model also takes full advantage of the innovation and efficiency of private enterprise to reduce the use of tax dollars. Furthermore, the public-private partnership model sets an incentive for customer service: the private developer will only be successful in the long term if the project provides a safe, reliable and valuable service to the community at a reasonable price.



### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Q: Who owns the road?**

A: The State of North Carolina. Throughout the entire duration of the Comprehensive Agreement with I-77 Mobility Partners, LLC, the State of North Carolina through NCDOT will have full ownership of the project.

**Q: What assurances are in place to protect the state of North Carolina, taxpayers and local communities?**

A: There are numerous safeguards built into the partnering agreements that eliminate risk to North Carolina and ensure that the state, taxpayers and local communities will always be protected as they continue to benefit from the I-77 Express Lanes.