

Portion of urban loop set to open Thursday

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The N.C. Department of Transportation announced Tuesday that a 7 1/2 mile stretch of the Interstate 40/Interstate 73 Greensboro Urban Loop will open Thursday.

Weather permitting, the roadway -- which runs from I-40 east of Gallimore Dairy Road to the I-85 Bypass/Business interchange -- is expected to open by early afternoon.

The new highway has interchanges at I-40 Business/I-840, Wendover Avenue and I-85/I-85 Business. The highway has eight travel lanes and a posted speed limit of 65 miles per hour.

The DOT said it will now reroute I-40 around southern Greensboro along the new highway and the existing I-85 Bypass. Existing I-40 will be renamed I-40 Business. After the new section opens, crews will switch out blue I-40 signs along the older section with new green I-40 Business signs, and exit numbers will also change along the route, which is expected to finish in the spring.

The newest portion of the urban loop is the first change to I-40 in the state since the Winston-Salem bypass opened in 1992. It is North Carolina's third section of I-73, and the fourth of Greensboro's urban loop.

Archer Western Contractors of Atlanta began construction on the \$122 million highway in February 2004 and this project means 25 miles of the total 44-mile Greensboro Urban Loop are now complete.

Starting Wednesday, the DOT will launch a Web site, www.ncdot.org/projects/greensborourbanloop, explain the changes to residents.