

## Road Construction Ahead

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NW GUILFORD COUNTY – Motorists will soon have a new way to get around Greensboro as another section of the urban loop opens. The latest portion of the multi-lane roadway will open in about three weeks and will encompass the area from I-85 South southwest of Greensboro to Bryan Boulevard near Piedmont Triad International Airport. The 10-mile stretch cost about \$367 million, says Lydia McIntyre of the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

“We’ll be mighty glad to have it,” Ted Johnson, the airport’s executive director, says of the road. According to the Guilford County Airport Area Plan, the loop “will have a significant impact on transportation in the airport area.”

The project is one of several that will eventually improve road access to the airport. Also known as Painter Boulevard, the 41-mile beltway around the city has been on the books since the 1970s. The section from U.S. 70 on the eastern side of Greensboro to I-85 South has been open over two years.

The third leg of the project, from Bryan Boulevard around to U.S. 70 on Greensboro’s eastern side, will complete the loop. However, that portion remains unfunded, McIntyre says.

The section of Greensboro’s beltway about to open includes interchanges at Bryan Boulevard, Friendly Avenue, Wendover Avenue and I-85 South. A High Point Road interchange will be added later, with construction slated to begin in 2012.

The area around the new road has changed dramatically over the years. Mary Jane Gordon moved into the house in 1985 that her husband Bill purchased in 1967. Gordon remembers the rolling hills of a dairy farm behind their home near Friendly Avenue and Stagecoach Trail. “We used to be able to look out the front door and couldn’t see anything,” Gordon recalls. “In winter when there were no leaves on the trees, we could just see the houses on Stagecoach Trail. Now those houses are long gone – that’s where Painter Boulevard is now.”

Even with the new road, increased air traffic, and a tremendous amount of industrial and residential growth nearby, the Gordons aren’t ready to give up their home. “We’ve decided we’re going to stay here until they say, ‘We want you.’ Then they’re going to have to pay for us,” Gordon says. “We’ve got a lovely home – it’s got a full basement and is on an acre of land. It’s home, and we’re going to stay here.”

Gordon has a good attitude about their home's location. "Well, it's near the airport," she says with a laugh after lamenting that from their yard they can read the air carrier names on planes taking off. "And it's close to shopping, and there are lots of nice restaurants close by." She adds, "The neighborhood has changed. We just go with the flow."

Also in the airport area, the rerouting of Bryan Boulevard is nearing completion as well. Vehicles now travel on the new portion of the local roadway, but the project won't officially be completed for about another year. Work is still being done on ramps and bridges.

The new road, which opened in sections over the last several months, lies to the northwest of the original location. "The line was basically shifted to the northwest to allow for the new runway and expansion of the airport," McIntyre says.

In the coming years, other major road projects will change the face of northwest Guilford County. Construction on the Highway 68-220 Connector, which will eventually become a part of I-73, is scheduled to begin in 2010. The section from Highway 220 in Rockingham County to the Haw River near Winfree Road in Summerfield will be done first. Other portions of the road will cut across Summerfield and tie in with Highway 68 near Pleasant Ridge Road in northwest Greensboro, making travel easier from Highway 220 to the airport/I-40 area. Transportation officials hope the move will also alleviate some congestion from the heavily-traveled Highway 68 through Oak Ridge and Stokesdale. A 2013 construction date is planned for those sections of the highway.

Work on Highway 220 from Horse Pen Creek Road to I-73 near Winfree Road is also slated to begin in 2010, with right-of-way acquisition beginning next year. That \$50 million project will widen the highway from northwest Greensboro through Summerfield into four lanes with a center median.

Although construction could be years from now, the route for the relocation of Highway 150 from Auburn Road in Summerfield to around Bunch Road in Oak Ridge has yet to be determined. Public meetings have been held and comments solicited from citizens over the last several months. Steering committee members, which include transportation and local municipal officials, will now decide the route, which will be added to the Thoroughfare Plan. During a recent meeting, a proposed route that would tie in to Bunch Road was abandoned. The best of three other options was not determined.

According to McIntyre, the committee will consider environmental issues, historical properties, the number of homes and businesses that will be displaced, and costs of the various routes, as well as comments from residents who attended the meetings, before making a decision.

But both McIntyre and Summerfield Town Administrator Michael Brandt point out that just because a route is chosen does not necessarily mean that is exactly where the road will be built. That decision could hinge on development in the area and whether developers might be willing to fund a portion of the realignment. Since there are no state

funds for the project at this time, it could be years down the road before Highway 150 is actually moved unless private development funds are used.

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