

## Georgia Department of Transportation Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for the First Major Mobility Investment Program Project



The Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the first phase of the I-85 Widening

Project on July 25. The project is the first of an initial 11 Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP) projects to break ground.

Governor Nathan Deal; Georgia DOT State Transportation Board Chairman Jamie Boswell, Congressional District 10; State Transportation Board Member Rudy Bowen, Congressional District 7; Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurry, P.E.; and Randall Pugh, who represents the 9th Congressional District on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Department of Economic Development, were among those in attendance along with local officials. Remarks and groundbreaking occurred at the 2 p.m. event, held at the Braselton Event Center located at 5257 Highway 53 in Braselton, Georgia. "In recent years, thousands of new citizens have come to Georgia to find the opportunities and quality of life indicative of the No. 1 state for business," Governor Deal said. "This rapid population growth requires transportation infrastructure that moves products and people more quickly and efficiently. Thanks to the General Assembly's

bold action in passing the Transportation Funding Act in 2015, we are now able to begin this first MMIP project, an unprecedented and innovative step to significantly improve Georgia's transportation network for its users. I also appreciate the work of the State Transportation Board in seeing one of the nation's largest infrastructure undertakings come to fruition. Today, we ensure that the initiatives we have put into place over these last seven and a half years will continue into the next decade to benefit generations of Georgians yet to come."

The I-85 Widening Project, constructed in two phases, will increase capacity by adding a third driving lane in each direction utilizing the existing median along a 24-mile stretch of highway from the I-985 interchange in Gwinnett County to Highway 129 in Jackson County. The first phase will occur between I-985 and just north of State Road 53 in Gwinnett, Barrow, and Jackson counties. The project also includes three overpass bridge replacements along the corridor and one northbound and one southbound mainline bridge replacement. The project is anticipated to help reduce overall future delay in the corridor by up to 56 percent.

"Georgia DOT is making a major investment in the state's roadway transportation network to meet regional needs and deliver positive results to drivers," Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurry said.

Read Excerpt: <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=80dbe14272ec0b5e1a1bf5b4e&id=71dcd6d91>

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### About the Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with GDOT as the statewide provider of the federally fund Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program.

Our goal is to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient.

Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

## Meet Georgia's Solar Road

*People usually think of highways as polluted eyesores, but an 18-mile stretch of road in rural Georgia is working to change that perception*



More than 164,000 miles of highway stretch across the U.S., enough to circle the world 6.5 times. But only 18 miles of it endeavors to become the world's first

sustainable highway.

The Ray C. Anderson Memorial Highway, or "The Ray" for short, is a section of Interstate 85 in southwestern Georgia that has implemented environmentally minded projects in honor of its namesake. Anderson founded carpet manufacturer Interface Inc. and was called the "greenest CEO in America" for his efforts to make his company environmentally sustainable. The Ray was dedicated in his memory in 2014.

"We haven't thought about how to make a road smarter, be able to communicate with drivers," says Harriet Langford, Anderson's daughter and founder and president of The Ray, an organization that is dedicated to working on the highway. "We haven't really thought about the extensive land we have. Just on our 18-mile corridor, we have 250 acres of land that's just underutilized."

The Ray works to use that land. Kernza wheat, whose deep roots help retain clean water and trap carbon, grows on the shoulder. Bioswales, drainage ditches filled with native Georgia vegetation, capture pollutants during rainstorms.

The I-85 visitor center in West Point, Georgia, has a solar-powered charging station, a solar-paved roadway and a tire pressure system to improve road safety, another goal of The Ray. After cars drive over the system, they come

across a kiosk where drivers request a paper ticket or enter their phone number to get a text with information about their tire pressure. A 7,000-square-foot pollinator garden provides a butterfly and honeybee habitat.

"We're going to force infrastructure to multitask through technology, and that's one of the overarching goals and tenants of The Ray," says Allie Kelly, the organization's executive director. "What opportunities are we given to explore and extract more value and more activity out of our existing assets? Because transportation assets and infrastructure are largely single-use."

Kelly says The Ray spends a total of about \$1 million per year, including on staff and the highway projects. Funding comes from a Ray C. Anderson Foundation endowment, individual contributions and corporate partnerships. This year, The Ray will also receive funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation, its main partner.

Ray Hill, senior lecturer at Emory University's Goizueta Business School, says there needs to be more practical information like this when assessing The Ray. "There's a huge amount of experimentation in the energy sector generally that's going to change the nature of how we generate electricity and how we consume it, and this is part of one of those experiments," says Hill, who has experience with large infrastructure projects.

Read Excerpt: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2018-07-17/dont-miss-this-highways-solar-road-and-pollinator-garden>

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CEI, 3330 Cumberland Blvd. Suite 500, Atlanta, Georgia, 30339