

Section of I-77 toll lanes in Lake Norman area opening this weekend



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The project adding toll lanes along Interstate 77 north of Charlotte is nearly complete.

I-77 MOBILITY PARTNERS



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Drivers on Interstate 77 in the Lake Norman area will have their first chance this weekend to test out the newly built toll lanes.

The section of the express lanes from Hambright Road in Huntersville to Exit 36 in Mooresville will open at 10 a.m. Saturday, according to a news release from I-77 Mobility Partners, which is constructing, operating and maintaining the lanes through a public-private partnership with the N.C. Department of Transportation. The firm is a spinoff from Madrid-based global infrastructure firm Cintra.

“We are excited for drivers to start using this section of the express lanes, as we offer a new transportation choice along the I-77 corridor,” said Javier Tamargo, CEO of I-77 Mobility, in a news release Friday afternoon. “The private investment in I-77 Express

has been instrumental to deliver this project and other infrastructure improvements along the existing portion of I-77 sooner for the State of North Carolina and motorists.”

For the lowest toll rates, drivers should [obtain an NC Quick Pass transponder](#), which is also usable for toll roads in states that use E-ZPass, SunPass or Peach Pass transponders. Users can set up a prepaid account — and register for a high-occupancy option that allows toll-free travel on the express lanes.

For drivers without transponders, equipment installed along the interstate will photograph license plates so that bills can be mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle. The bill-by-mail rate for users of the I-77 toll lanes will be about 35% higher than for those with transponders.

[A similar system is already in use](#) on the Charlotte region's first toll road — [the Monroe Expressway, which opened last fall](#).

Signs ahead of each segment along I-77 will indicate the price for driving that stretch. Rates for the first six months will be defined for each 30-minute period of the day, with the pricing switching to a dynamic model thereafter that updates every five minutes. [More details about pricing are available here](#).

Motorists may continue using the interstate's general-purpose lanes for free.

The toll-lanes project has [faced considerable backlash from communities](#) in the Lake Norman area — and multiple delays, at one time having been slated to open by the end of 2018. However, [the company won't face fines for the delays until Nov. 1](#).