

# Huntersville-to-Mooresville I-77 Express Lanes to open Saturday



I-77 Express Lanes north of Stumpton Road were empty Friday, ahead of a Saturday-morning opening.

- Lee Sullivan



After years of discussion, debate, design and construction, the northern section of Interstate 77 Express Lanes will open Saturday, the lead contractor on the 26-mile project announced Friday.

Toll lanes between Exit 36 in Mooresville and Hambright Road in Huntersville will be available beginning at 10 a.m., according to I-77 Mobility Partners, which also will maintain the lanes and collect tolls as part of a public-private partnership with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

### **Want to know more?**

Take a “virtual ride” on I-77 Express and get more information on toll rates by visiting [i77express.com](http://i77express.com).

“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 I-77 Mobility Partners CEO Javier Tamargo. “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.”

Tamargo added that I-77 Mobility Partners personnel will be monitoring the interstate at all times to evaluate use and the express lanes operation.

“We absolutely wanted to open on a weekend, when traffic is not as heavy, to watch how the lanes function and to make sure they are operating as planned,” Tamargo said about Saturday’s “soft opening” prior to the Monday morning commute.

I-77 Express Lanes runs adjacent to the existing general-purpose lanes. Drivers will have the option of using the express lanes, the general-purpose lanes or a combination of both. The number of free, general-purpose lanes remains the same. There are two express lanes between Hambright Road and Exit 28 in Cornelius, and one express lane between Exit 28 in Cornelius and Exit 36 in Mooresville.

The express lanes have signage one-quarter of a mile ahead of each segment that displays the transponder toll rate applicable to drive that segment. The toll rate displayed when entering I-77 Express is the price motorists will be charged for that segment.

During the first 180 days of operations, rates are set for every 30-minute period of each day and will not change in real time. Rates will be discounted an average of 25 percent for that period.

“This allows I-77 Express drivers to get used to the facility, knowing the applicable rate for their trip beforehand,” I-77 Mobility Partners said in its announcement.

“Dynamic” pricing, with rates adjusted as often as every five minutes based on traffic volume, will apply after the first 180 days.

Using an NC Quick Pass transponder is “the fastest, easiest way to pay” to deal with tolls in North Carolina and other states that accept SunPass, Peach Pass and E-ZPass transponders, the company said. For vehicles without a transponder, cameras will capture an image of license plates, and bills will be mailed to vehicles’ registered owners.

I-77 Mobility Partners LLC is financing, developing, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining the 26-mile I-77 Express corridor as part of the first-ever public-private partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The rest of the I-77 Express Lanes project, which extends into Charlotte, is expected to open later this year.