

Phase 1 work of Big Shanty breaks ground

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Traffic is backed up on Barrett Parkway near Town Center Mall on Thursday afternoon. Groundbreaking will occur soon on the Big Shanty Extension, which is a four lane road being built north to south in the Town Center area.

KENNESAW — The largest phase of Kennesaw’s Big Shanty Road Connector project will break ground Tuesday.

Lanie Shipp, executive director of the Town Center Area Community Improvement District, said the entire project will cost \$26.2 million, but will provide some much-needed relief to the heavily congested Barrett Parkway and Chastain Road.

“It will probably take a while for everyone to change their traffic patterns, but right now, the only way to access the interstates is east to west,” Shipp said. “We have desperately needed something for a long, long time to take riders east to west and give them other options. The Big Shanty Extension will do that.”

Shipp said the project has been 11 years in the making. The TCACID has funded all of the project’s engineering costs, while grants and the Cobb County Department of Transportation will fund construction and other costs.

“Once our CID was formed in 1998, immediately we decided this was the first project we would study. It’s taken a long time to do all of the engineering work, environmental assessments and break the project up into three phases while determining different funding sources, but things have finally come together,” Shipp said.

Phase 3 of the project, which runs from George Busbee Parkway to Chastain Meadows Parkway, began in November, and Shipp said it should be completed by the end of this year.

Phase 1, which breaks ground Tuesday and will run from Barrett Lakes Boulevard to George Busbee Parkway, will be the longest, most expensive and most difficult stretch of the project to build, as it will travel under an Interstate 75 bridge, Shipp said. Phase 1 will be funded mainly through an \$8 million grant

through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Phase 2 of the project will run from Chastain Road to Barrett Lakes Boulevard. Shipp said construction of that phase should begin sometime in 2011, depending on when funding is made available. According to the Cobb DOT, the entire project should be completed by winter 2012.

Shipp said the roads will consist of four lanes, two traveling in each direction. A multi-use pedestrian/bicycle trail will also be built along the extension.

“We’re all very, very excited about it, and there’s always a challenge when you start a major project like this, but with the new sports facility going up at KSU and all that is going on in the area, it will be such an improvement and will do so much for the mobility of the area’s residents,” Shipp said.