



THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM



- North Carolina was originally allocated 714 miles, which were designated to become Interstates 95, 85, 40 and 26. In 1957, the total interstate mileage allocated to North Carolina increased to 776 miles when I-77 was added to connect Charlotte and Ohio.
- I-77 enters North Carolina from Virginia in the vicinity of Mt. Airy and continues southward through Elkin and Statesville to Charlotte. The length of I-77 from the Virginia line to Charlotte is 96 miles.
- In May 1959, the I-77 Location Study established the location of I-77 from Charlotte to the Virginia line via Statesville and Elkin and added approximately 15 miles to its total length.
- On Aug. 4, 1959, the N.C. State Highway Commission approved the corridor for routing I-77 between Charlotte and a point near Elkin. At the time this was approved, Statesville would become the only city in the state to be located at the crossroads of two through interstate highways.
- In late 1960, the Highway Commission voted to route I-77 just west of Mt. Airy through the area known as Fancy Gap. This route would serve the most people. After North Carolina's approval, this proposed route was forwarded to the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads for approval.
- In June 1963, the Highway Commission submitted a request for additional interstate mileage. This request resulted in an approximate two-mile extension or urban spur for I-77 in Charlotte from I-85 to US 74 (Independence Boulevard). This extension was approved on Oct. 1, 1964.
- Construction on I-77 started in the 1960s. In 1965, the first stretch of I-77 opened in Surry and Yadkin counties, followed by a 23-mile section, which opened in 1966 in Iredell County. In 1967, sections in Mecklenburg County, Yadkin County and Iredell County opened and in 1968, additional sections of I-77 in Mecklenburg County and Iredell County opened around the Cornelius/Davidson area.
- In Nov. 1968, the Highway Commission submitted a request for additional mileage to the Bureau of Public Roads. Following this request, I-77 was extended from Independence Boulevard in Charlotte to the South Carolina line. Since this section of highway was completed using primary funds as a relocation of US 21, the I-77 extension was only a designation.
- Additional segments opened during the 1970s. This included:
 - a section of I-77 in Mecklenburg County in 1972. I-77 was now opened from NC 73 (exit 28) to exit 73 north of Elkin.
 - I-77 from Cornelius south to Charlotte opened in 1975.
 - I-77 north from exit 73 to the Virginia border was the last segment to open in 1977 so I-77 was now complete through North Carolina from the South Carolina state line to the Virginia state line.

