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## Henderson interchange to open

### Traffic to flow on one ramp of U.S. 95-Beltway link

By [OMAR SOFRADZIJA](#)  
[REVIEW-JOURNAL](#)



Barrels block access Monday to a new ramp carrying northbound U.S. Highway 95 traffic to the westbound Las Vegas Beltway in Henderson. The barrels should be gone today, signaling the opening of the first part of the U.S. 95-Beltway interchange.  
Photo by [John Gurzinski](#).



Click image for enlargement.  
Graphic by [Mike Johnson](#).

Call it the Henderson Spaghetti Bowl, the Hub or the Pretzel if you'd like. But as of today, you'll also have to call the valley's newest interchange open, if only partly.

The southeastern valley crossing of U. S. Highway 95 and the Las Vegas Beltway is scheduled to have its first ramp opened to commuters in time for this morning's rush hour.

The ramp will link northbound U.S. 95 to the westbound Beltway, the latter of which is being extended to connect with U.S. 95 along Lake Mead Parkway.

"This tells everybody it's coming," Henderson Mayor Jim Gibson said at Monday ceremonies ahead of the road's public opening, set for no later than 5 a.m. today. "It's going to be the link we've needed for so long."

Added Clark County Commissioner Bruce Woodbury: "It's a significant milestone."

The 1,675-foot ramp, which starts at northbound U.S. 95's Lake Mead exit, loops westward to a height of 55 feet over U.S. 95 and carries traffic to the westbound Beltway.

Previously, drivers had to exit U.S. 95 at Lake Mead, taking that road west to the Beltway.

The new connection will not be seamless. Beltway-bound traffic

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will have to pass through a stoplight at Gibson Road for now. Plans are for a nonstop link to be in place by year's end.

The \$82 million U.S. 95-Beltway interchange, which has yet to gain a commonly-accepted nickname, will have seamless links in every direction by the time the project finishes early next year.

"There's going to be a series of other ramp openings throughout the rest of the year," said Rudy Malfabon, the Nevada Department of Transportation's deputy director for Southern Nevada.

That will be a boon for Henderson drivers, who have lacked a freeway hub in their part of the valley.

"It never made sense to have these two systems not tied into each other," Gibson said. "This really makes it complete."

While the Beltway is being extended eastward to connect with U. S. 95, that's as far as it will go. Lake Mead will continue to handle traffic east of U.S. 95.

The interchange is aimed at handling increased traffic loads expected at that junction.

Some 222,000 vehicles are expected to use the U.S. 95-Beltway interchange by 2023, compared to almost 134,000 vehicles using the former U.S. 95-Lake Mead interchange in 2003, according to the state highway department.

Construction, which started in September 2003, has tied up traffic at the busy U.S. 95-Lake Mead junction. But Gibson said hassles have been kept to a minimum.

"The project has gone as smoothly as it could be," Gibson said. "I drive through it a couple of times a day. While there are a few times I wish I didn't have to come through this direction, often I'm surprised how quickly I get through."

More information on the project is available on a project hot line at 267-3228 or at [www.215515project.com](http://www.215515project.com) on the Internet. The Web address takes its name from the alternate southern valley identities for U.S. 95 (also known as Interstate 515) and the Beltway (Interstate 215).



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