

I-4 expansion to include toll lanes



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ORLANDO --

How many times have you been driving on Interstate-4 and suddenly found yourself in what seems like thousands of red brake lights because of an accident that's shut down the interstate?

It is such a headache for many, but it seems there's a solution – express toll lanes.

Governor Rick Scott just signed off on a plan to spend \$2.1 billion as part of a project to expand I-4 by adding express toll lanes, along with toll-free lanes.

The express toll lanes would be added along a 25-mile stretch on I-4 from State Road 434 in Longwood to Kirkman Road in Orlando.

During the morning rush, if you wanted to use a toll lane, it could cost you close to \$8 just to get from Longwood to the South Street exit in downtown Orlando.

The project also includes:

- Rebuilding 15 major intersections
- Building 56 new bridges
- Replacing 68 bridges
- Making modifications to 13 bridges

The \$2.1 billion may sound like a good amount to get the project going, but it's not going to be enough to finish.

The study out by the Florida Department of Transportation indicated as congestion continues to grow with more residents and tourists, drivers will be willing to fork over the money not to keep getting caught in traffic.

That study by FDOT, which cost over half a million dollars to compile, stated the accidents are because of higher traffic congestion in the morning, when people are going to work.

While transportation officials haven't set a price yet on how much drivers will be asked to pay per mile, the study was based on a minimum rate of 15 cents per mile, swinging higher during the morning rush hour, than when commuters are driving home.

Construction is expected to start around 2015 and wrap up sometime in 2020.

The plan lists a number of planned improvements and bridges to help toll-free lanes as well, to help alleviate some of the congestion as well on this major artery that was built before Disney World was.

