

Orlando's I-4 to get toll lanes

Mar. 4, 2013 [Deborah Whistler](#) | Fleet Owner

Plans are in the works to add toll lanes to Orlando's busiest expressway, the I-4, the major north-south distributor road within the metro area and the principal route west to Tampa and the Gulf Coast, and northeast to the Atlantic coast and I-95.

The 21.1-mi. stretch of highway centered on downtown Orlando is now on course to be widened and reconstructed, according to the [Toll Road News](#), and the extra lanes will be toll express lanes.

It's one of the largest highway projects in the state and by far the largest getting under way in the Orlando area — 85 extra lane-miles of mainline roadway, almost complete repaving, rebuild of 19 interchanges and about 130 new bridges. Almost all existing bridges will be rebuilt. Construction cost is estimated at roughly \$2 billion and project cost could be closer to \$3 billion.

Basically the project is widening I-4 from six and eight main lanes through the metro area to 10 and 12 lanes.

The widen-and-rebuild aspects of the project have been around for the best part of two decades, advancing in fits and starts until last year when the project was frozen by local U.S. Congressman John Mica. Mica used his position as chair of the House Transportation Committee to sneak a small rider onto an unrelated bill prohibiting any toll on I-4, the [Toll Road News](#) notes. Mica's 'hold' on the project expired with the last round of highway legislation.

Loreen Bobo, project manager at Florida Dept. of Transportation, said the necessary permitting and environmental reviews are virtually done and 97% of new right of way required has been purchased. What remains is mostly minor updates and amendments to earlier plans, getting paperwork in order.