



Posted: 5:51 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27, 2012

# I-4 widening, new toll lanes could begin in 2014

**ORLANDO, Fla.** — WFTV found out that I-4 could be widened much sooner than expected, and the new lanes will most likely be toll roads.

Up until this point, WFTV has been told that the I-4 expansion was not even on the calendar yet. But at the groundbreaking, for a Sunrail station Friday, WFTV's Kathi Belich learned that the expansion could start as early as 2014.

The nearly \$2 billion project would widen I-4 from State Road 434 to Kirkman Road.

FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad said Friday he wants a private company to build four middle toll lanes for I-4 and run them for 30 years. He said there will be the same number of free lanes as there are today.

U.S. Congressman John Mica came to Altamonte Springs on Friday to celebrate the start of construction of Sunrail, but he brought what could be great news for I-4 commuters.

"We will be starting construction concurrently in the next four years on I-4," Mica said.

He dropped that bombshell in telling WFTV that when the first phase of Sunrail is up and running, one of the incentives for commuters to use it is that by then, I-4 construction will be under way.

"We'll have that torn up from south [Orange County](#) all the way to Volusia County," Mica said.

While Mica said the I-4 construction could start in three to four years, Prasad then told WFTV that he wants it to happen even sooner.

"My goal is to get that under construction in 2014," Prasad said.

I-4's heaviest traffic is at the 408 near downtown Orlando, where almost 200,000 cars travel everyday.

FDOT wants to see a private company add four toll lanes through the area, not doing that just from the 408 to Ivanhoe Road could take at least three years.

Prasad said Friday that FDOT is working to get the project cost down to \$1.6 billion from almost \$1.9 billion, and it has almost \$900 million set aside.

"We're going to enter into a 30-year concession agreement where a private firm will design, build, operate and maintain it for 30 years," Prasad said.

Mica said he's going to introduce a bill next Tuesday he says will bring relief to I-4 drivers.