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I-4 Mobility Partners picked for massive Interstate 4 overhaul

By Dan Tracy, Orlando Sentinel

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The **I-4** Mobility Partners team led by the Swedish international construction conglomerate Skanska won the \$2.3 billion bid today to rebuild Interstate 4 through downtown Orlando.

Construction on what is being called the ultimate improvement to the highway could begin as early as Christmas, though next year may be more likely.

I-Mobility beat other three other bidders, each of whom will be paid \$2 million by the state Department of Transportation for their work.

"We are going to work very hard to deliver a safe project," said Cesar Souza, the top Orlando manager of I-4 Mobility Partners.

His team, which seven major partners and even more subcontractors, will be expected to bring \$1.3 billion to the venture, with the remaining money supplied by the state.

I-4 Mobility will be reimbursed with fees paid to drive on four toll lanes that would be laid in the middle of I-4, from Kirkman Road to the south to State Road 434 to the north.

Tolls could bring in \$28 million in 2020, a consulting report estimated, with that number rising to \$225 million in 2045.

A nine-member panel of state transportation experts ranked I-4 Mobility first based on the consortiums technical, financial and administrative proposals. The firm scored 91.5 points out of a possible 100. The runner-up, Ultimate Mobility Partners, scored 85.47 points.

Congestion caused by the work could send frustrated motorists to the SunRail commuter train, which starts May 1 and has 12 stops along a 31.5-mile route from DeBary in Volusia County through downtown to Sand Lake Road in south Orange County.

Noranne Downs, who runs FDOT in Central Florida, said the massive redo will require lots of patience from motorists who cannot use SunRail.

"But," she said, "at the end it's going to be worth it."