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Public Meeting Video Transcript

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Opening Sequence:

This project is going to change the way we commute here in Central Florida.

I-4 is the backbone of Central Florida for transportation.

Nobody travels to Orlando without using I-4.

Announcer:

We have begun Building a Better I-4. Interstate 4 will be completely transformed along a 21 mile stretch from Kirkman Road to State Road 434. This much needed makeover will include adding Express Lanes, reconstructing 15 major interchanges, building dozens of new bridges and improving safety to create a signature corridor with added capacity.

Jennifer Vreeland, Deputy Program Manager, I-4 Ultimate Project:

I-4 was built in the early '60s. It wasn't built to handle the volume of traffic that it handles today. So, what we're going to do is not just add the express lanes, we're going to reconstruct the entire I-4 corridor. The interchanges will be wider. There will be more lanes within the interchanges. ~~Uh,~~ the curves will be softer or gentler. And it will be just an easier ride, a more smooth ride.



Frank O'Dea, Director of Transportation Development, Florida Department of Transportation District Five:

This is an improvement that's going to be here for the next 50 years. And it's going to be a long term improvement and you're going to see it, once we're completed with construction, you're going to immediately see the improvements, but they're going to be around for decades to come.

Announcer:

One of the biggest improvements will be the addition of express lanes in the center of the interstate.

Steve Olson, Public Information Officer for the Florida Department of Transportation:

The express lanes are going to offer people choices. You'll still have the general use lanes, the free lanes. So, we're not taking anything away, we're adding something in the middle that will offer people convenience, and it will offer them a little more guarantee on their time getting through the metro area.

Announcer:

Express lanes have proven to be popular with state DOTs and drivers around the country, including here in Florida. They've already been put into use in Southeast Florida. At the end of 2008, Miami-Dade County took congested HOV lanes on I-95 and converted them into express lanes.

Rory Santana, ITS Manager, FDOT District 6, 95 Express, (Retired):

When 95 express first opened up, the effect to the commuters almost immediately was better service. We are moving more vehicles. They are moving better. Commuting is, starting to do a little mode shift to transit, which is where we wanted it to be going. So, it basically has been a win win all the way around.

Announcer:

Broward County opened 595 Express in 2014.

Paul Lampley, FDOT, 595 Construction Project Manager:

With the express lanes what we're trying to accomplish is provide the commuter the option to have a reliable commute, whether they're going to work or coming home from work. We've seen a tremendous decrease in the traffic congestion. Not only in the general purpose lanes, and State Road 84, but now with the express lanes open, we're, even on day one we had about 15,000 users. We expect that volume of traffic using the express lanes, those long distance commuters to increase and that will free up more additional capacity in the general purpose lanes which are toll free for those, those users that live in the intermediate points where they do not have access to the express lanes.

Announcer:

But the I-4 Ultimate project is more than just express lanes, bridges, interchanges, asphalt and pavement.



Jon Walker, Program Project Manager, SGL Constructors:

Our team spent a lot of time asking ourselves why is this project so important and what does it take to make it a signature corridor. First, improving the economy. Second, connecting the communities and third enhancing livability through Central Florida. And I believe the I-4 Ultimate will do all three of those important items.

J.K. "Brook" Brookshire, Project Director/Vice President, SGL Constructors:

It's just a fantastic project. It's really exciting to be on a project where it's not just your standard bridge and road. It's bridge and road and the aesthetic quality of the whole corridor. It's going to be a fantastic icon for Central Florida.

Announcer:

To efficiently manage the construction over 21 miles, the I-4 Ultimate project is divided into four sections: Traveling east on I-4, Area 1 is the Attractions. Area 2 is Downtown Orlando. Area 3 is Ivanhoe. And Area 4 is Altamonte.

The planned improvements begin at Kirkman Road, west of downtown Orlando near Universal Studios and the International Drive attractions. The Kirkman interchange will be reconfigured to improve traffic operations and alleviate congestion at the interchange. The left exits off of I-4 will be replaced with more traditional exit ramps on the right side of the interstate. Extensive coordination with the city of Orlando resulted in the addition of the Grand National Drive extension over I-4 to provide a much needed bypass for the heavy tourist traffic in the area. The new overpass will feature express lane direct access in the eastbound direction from Grand National Drive and the westbound direction to Grand National Drive. Additional ramps will be constructed, but not opened, in anticipation of the future express lane extension west on I-4.

The Turnpike interchange will be improved with the addition of new lanes on the westbound off ramp and eastbound onramp which will reduce congestion during the peak hours of travel. A collector-distributor roadway will be built in the westbound direction along I-4 to improve operations caused by weaving traffic between Conroy Road and the Turnpike.

The Florida Department of Transportation incorporated the I-4 Ultimate master plan in previously completed interchange work at Conroy Road, reducing traffic flow disruptions in this large retail area. FDOT will construct an additional auxiliary lane in the westbound direction from Orange Blossom Trail to Conroy to accommodate the heavy traffic demand in that area.

I-4 in the area of John Young Parkway was improved several years ago with provisions made for this ultimate project. Therefore, work disrupting traffic flow will be minimal.

At the Orange Blossom Trail interchange, westbound I-4 motorists will encounter a more traditional right hand westbound exit ramp, replacing the existing left hand exit ramp.



As I-4 approaches downtown Orlando, operational improvements will be made to the Michigan and Kaley interchanges by braiding the onramps with the off ramps. This will eliminate the problematic weaving section on I-4 while maintaining access between these two closely spaced interchanges.

The I-4 State Road 408 interchange is one of Florida's most heavily traveled. Interim improvements completed in 2009 will be expanded upon by providing third and fourth level flyover ramps from westbound State Road 408 to westbound I-4 and from westbound I-4 to eastbound State Road 408. In addition, direct connect flyovers are being added to access State Road 408 in both directions from the I-4 Express Lanes. Significant work is also planned on State Road 408 including reconstructing the main line bridges over I-4.

Direct connections to and from the express lanes will be added to the Anderson and South Street area to carry downtown traffic without adding congestion to the main line general use lanes. The widening of I-4 through downtown Orlando will result in realignments to Garland and Hughey Streets. FDOT plans to improve pedestrian access along Garland and under I-4 as part of the work.

The Colonial Drive interchange will be reconfigured to a single point urban interchange. This improves traffic flow and allows all left hand traffic movements to be controlled by a single traffic signal.

Direct connect ramps from Ivanhoe Boulevard to the eastbound express lanes and from the westbound express lanes to Ivanhoe Boulevard will be provided. Looping exit ramps will be removed and an additional eastbound auxiliary lane will be added from Colonial Drive to Princeton Street.

An additional eastbound auxiliary lane from Colonial Drive to Princeton Street, along with an additional right hand turn lane from the eastbound Princeton Street exit ramp, will foster free flowing traffic heading out of downtown Orlando. In addition, a second left turn lane from Princeton will be added to access westbound I-4 as a means to improve signal operations. Another additional eastbound auxiliary lane will extend from Princeton to Fairbanks to keep traffic moving.

In Winter Park, improvements will be made to the vertical and horizontal alignment of I-4, enhancing safety of this segment originally built to 1960s standards. The vertical curvature in this area will be flattened to today's more stringent standards. The horizontal curve will be improved, most notably through the Fairbanks curve.

Expanded exit and entrance ramps, plus an additional left turn lane from Lee Road onto eastbound I-4, will reduce backups in this area. A westbound auxiliary lane will be added along I-4 between Maitland Boulevard and Lee Road.

The northernmost section of the I-4 Ultimate project, begins east of Kennedy Boulevard, near historic Eatonville, and ends east of State Road 434 – for a total length of 6.4 miles. To improve operations, the busy I-4 interchange at Maitland Boulevard will be extensively reconfigured to a three level interchange allowing for free flow traffic movements to and from I-4 without stopping at signals.



Maitland Boulevard will be bridged over Lake Destiny Road, removing a signalized intersection from the corridor. Access will be maintained via dedicated ramps from I-4 westbound to Lake Destiny Road and from Lake Destiny Road to I-4 westbound. Improvements to the local road system will provide adequate connectivity in the area. Maitland Boulevard will also be bridged over Keller Road and Maitland Summit Boulevard with ramps down to the intersections below to access Keller and Maitland Summit. This improvement allows Maitland Boulevard drivers to avoid signals at those locations. Finally, a pedestrian bridge is being added on the south side of the interchange to provide much needed connectivity across I-4.

The Wymore Road overpass will be reconstructed to allow for the widened I-4 footprint to pass underneath.

The I-4 and State Road 436 planned improvements call for a single point diamond interchange to alleviate congestion, similar to those proposed at Keller Road and Colonial Drive. Work will include expansion of the off ramps to include triple left lanes onto State Road 436.

The Wymore Road median opening on State Road 436 will be closed and the signal removed due to the proximity of the I-4 interchange. All north/south access on Wymore across State Road 436 and left turns onto State Road 436, and left turns onto State Road 436, will be made on Westmonte Drive. Improvements will be made to Westmonte Drive to facilitate the additional traffic diverted from Wymore Road.

A new pedestrian underpass crossing under State Road 436 in the north/south direction will accommodate crossings on State Road 436.

The Central Parkway overpass will be reconstructed and will feature express lane direct access in the westbound direction from Central Parkway and in the eastbound direction to Central Parkway.

The proposed improvements continue through the State Road 434 interchange. The addition of a westbound State Road 434 to westbound I-4 loop ramp, along with wider and longer ramps, will significantly improve operations on State Road 434 and prevent ramps from backing up onto the main line I-4 as happens today. To improve weaving conditions between the westbound rest area and State Road 434, the rest area ramp will be relocated and changed to a loop ramp allowing for a greater distance between onramp and offramp and improving flow on the main line. The I-4 Ultimate project improvements end east of State Road 434 and will be transitioned to match the existing lane configuration.

Construction is underway now and all regular lanes will remain open during peak travel times. But now is your time to prepare because I-4 will be changing.

Stay informed about the project by logging onto I-4 Ultimate.com. The website has information about the entire 21 mile corridor and what changes will be made.



Under the red tab, Project Info, learn more about I-4 Ultimate. See the four project sections in more detail. Future I-4 shows you all the interchanges. Click on each one to see how they will be reconstructed. Check out job opportunities, learn more about the special features of the project, get more details on express lanes and find out more about the team building a better I-4.

Under the orange, Construction Info tab find out about alerts and detours. View the construction map. See a live camera feed of the project and sign up for route-specific email and text alerts.

Email or text alerts will notify you of construction impacts that will change your regular I-4 drive. Advance alerts will notify you of lane closures, ramp closures and detours so you can plan ahead. Signing up for 511 alerts will give you real-time info to let you know what's happening right now on your commute.

There's even a Florida 511 section on the I-4 Ultimate website to give you more details about this free, traffic information system.

Because I-4 Ultimate construction may affect your daily commute, FDOT encourages drivers to consider alternative forms of transportation like ride sharing, SunRail, LYNX or Bike Share. You can find out more about these under the green, Choose Your Commute tab, and by visiting their websites.

Here you'll also find information about alternate routes.

The dark blue tab on the website is the news and media resources section where you'll find project newsletters, renderings, photos, videos, news coverage and public service announcements about I-4 Ultimate.

The purple tab, Public Outreach and Education, is where you can sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, find out about upcoming events in your area and learn about the people who are building a better I-4.

To meet the aggressive six and a half year schedule for completion, the whole project will be under construction at one time. Crews are beginning to establish work zones within I-4. Major work activities will be underway throughout the entire 21 mile project by the summer of 2015.

Over the next six months, you'll begin seeing construction start in the downtown area. The first phase of work will involve setting up cones and barricades, surveying, moving utilities, delivering materials and equipment to the construction site and the building of foundations. This work will be happening at the State Road 408/I-4 interchange.

Also in the downtown area, the eastbound Ivanhoe exit ramp will be closed permanently. The elimination of this exit allows I-4 to be widened in this area and for a direct connection between I-4



and the express lanes to be built. Eastbound drivers will still have direct access to this section of downtown Orlando at the Amelia Street/State Road 50 or Princeton Street exits.

As Florida continues to upgrade its interstate system, drivers statewide are seeing big changes. In the Tampa area, this I-275 construction project is well underway. As major construction activities begin to accelerate on I-4, you should expect to see similar temporary roadways, bridges and ramps along with traffic pattern shifts as drivers are now experiencing on the I-275 project. And some ramps here may be closed for extended periods.

When you start to see those orange barrels and barrier walls, please remember to drive safely through the construction zones, focus on the road and pay attention. Don't be distracted by activity on the shoulder or in the median. And avoid talking on the phone and texting.

To keep traffic moving during construction, most lane closures will occur weeknights, beginning as early as 8:30PM and continuing as late as 7:00AM. Motorists should take the time now to explore alternate routes, like 17-92, John Young Parkway, or 434, so, if necessary, they have a plan B during construction.

FDOT's vision for I-4 expands beyond our 21 mile project. Later this year, design begins on an additional 40 miles of interstate improvements and express lanes. Called I-4 Beyond the Ultimate, the future of the entire corridor from Polk County into Volusia County will be transformed. To learn more, visit I4Express.com.

The best way to stay informed about what's going on with the I-4 Ultimate project is to sign up for route specific email and text alerts and our monthly e-newsletter. Visit I4Ultimate.com to get started.

Noranne Downs, District 5 DOT Secretary:

They're keeping lanes open as they are now. There'll be a lot of night work which will be good. But it's still going to be a little painful. But 6 and a half years for this size project, 21 miles, is not that bad.

Mike Gwynne, Resident Engineer on the I-4 Ultimate Project:

Our commitment is to maintain the traveling public's safety and mobility as our primary focus. And we're going to be communicating with the traveling public, as much and whenever possible to tell them exactly what we're doing and then actually execute what we told them we were going to do. We're doing everything we can to make sure they're safe. And if they pay attention and follow the rules of the road, they'll make sure that we're safe. And together we can get through this.

Loreen Bobo, I-4 Ultimate Construction Program Manager:

When we're done, it's really going to make a big difference in how we travel through Central Florida.



I4Ultimate.com

Your source for improvements to I-4 in Orange and Seminole counties



Announcer:

I-4 Ultimate project representatives are here tonight to answer your questions and show you how I-4, in your area, is being transformed. Feel free to ask questions, visit I4Ultimate.com, or call our information line at 844-ULT-INFO to stay informed.