

Part of Westmoreland Drive closing for I-4 Ultimate work

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Starting on Monday, July 27 the Florida Department of Transportation will be temporarily closing South Westmoreland Drive directly under State Road 408, as part of the ongoing work on the I-4 Ultimate project.

“That’s not a permanent closure, it’s a temporary closure,” said Loreen Bobo, manager of the project that is widening Interstate 4 and adding toll lanes in the middle.

The closure of South Westmoreland Drive will continue every day from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. until Friday, Aug. 21, and is needed, she said, for bridge work to improve the I-4/SR 408 interchange.

“We will be closing Westmoreland between Long and Carter streets under 408 during the day,” Bobo said, “We’re doing daytime work because there are quite a few homes in the area, and we’re trying to minimize the impact. A lot of that work is pile driving and things that are quite noisy.”

To assist drivers who rely on Westmoreland Drive – which continues through downtown Orlando and into College Park – FDOT noted that anyone driving northbound on South Westmoreland Drive can detour by turning right on Gore Street, left on South Parramore Avenue, then left on South Street to proceed to the end of the detour at South Westmoreland Drive.

Those driving south on South Westmoreland Drive can do the opposite: turn left on Anderson Street, right on South Parramore Avenue, and then right again on Gore Street.

“The good thing is there are several roads that are easy to detour on,” Bobo said.

She added that “By doing that full closure, we are able to get in and do the bridge work we need. We’ll have longer work periods to do the work, so fundamentally we’ll finish more quickly.”

This is part of a project that is expected to take six years to complete. As part of the construction work, in June FDOT permanently closed the Ivanhoe Boulevard exit. Motorists who have traditionally relied on the Ivanhoe Boulevard exit were directed to take either Exit 85 (Princeton Street) or Exit 83A (Amelia Street). The Ivanhoe Boulevard eastbound entrance ramp to I-4 and westbound I-4 exit ramp are staying open.

Since then, FDOT has been monitoring the traffic going onto Exit 85, Bobo said, to ensure that the Ivanhoe Boulevard closing hasn’t created any problems on the highway.

So far, she said, it hasn’t.

“We monitored that area for probably about two weeks -- the first week every day, several times a day, to make sure the signals are working,” Bobo said. “We didn’t want traffic backing up onto the interstate because that’s unsafe.” That did not turn out to be an issue, she said.

“We made some tweaks to the signal timing at Princeton, but otherwise it’s been a good month since that (exit closure) happened, and it has gone smoothly,” Bobo said.

The I-4 Ultimate project is expected to cost \$2.3 billion, and is reconstructing 21 miles of the interstate from west of Kirkman Road to east of State Road 434 in Longwood. Construction started in February and will continue until 2020.

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