

I-4 ultimate officials prep for new ramp near Amway in Downtown Orlando

Officials must drain lake before beginning construction work

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ORLANDO, Fla. - I-4 Ultimate Project officials are prepping to begin working on a big upgrade for a major intersection along the I-4 corridor, and News 6 traffic anchor Amy Biondello took a look at some of the early steps of this stage of the Big Drive.

Some of the early steps begin with setting up work in a spot that is currently filled with water, and Biondello spoke with I-4 Ultimate Project officials about the process of draining lakes, and how draining one lake affects other lakes in Downtown Orlando.

Standing on top of the Geico garage in downtown Orlando gives a bird's-eye view of the work happening at the corner of I-4 and State Road 408. The unassuming pond that is the next step to move the project forward can also be seen.

“We're getting ready to start pumping the water down out of the pond so that we can come in and build two bridge support structures that will support the westbound I-4 to westbound State Road 408 ramp that is part of the overall interchange reconstruction,” I-4 Ultimate Public Information Officer David Parks said.

Many of the lakes seen around downtown Orlando are interconnected, which helps to control the overall water level in the area.

“So this pond is connected to Lake Lucerne that's also connected to Lake Cherokee, so when we do anything in this pond it does have a ripple effect with some of those other ponds so that is something that we need to keep an eye on as well,” Parks said.

An underground pipe system makes it possible.

“So we've got underground drainage pipes that carry water from the roadways to this pond but there are other pipes that connect this pond to Lake Lucerne and Lake Cherokee also,” Parks said.

The draining process usually takes a few days to clear out the water and clean out the pond for crews to come in and start construction.

Once the building begins, construction is a multi-step process that will take months. Eventually, the result is expected to make driving in Orlando less of a headache.

“When construction is done you'll have a ramp that will take you from westbound I-4 directly to westbound 408, helping to alleviate some of that mixing bowl that we have here in the downtown area,” Parks said.

The new ramp will be built within feet of the Geico garage.

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