The Florida Department of Transportation welcomes you to the Alternatives Public Meeting for the “Beyond I-4 Ultimate” project development and environment reevaluation study (or PD&E study).
Interstate 4 extends across the state of Florida from Tampa to Daytona Beach. The Central Florida portion from the Polk/Osceola County Line to Interstate 95 in Volusia County is approximately 73 miles in length. There’s an average of 1.5 million daily trips on I-4, with 58% of those trips being commuters.
This study is a reevaluation of PD&E studies that were previously done 12 to 15 years ago. The section from State Road 435 (Kirkman Road) to State Road 434 in Orange and Seminole Counties received approval from the Federal Highway Administration and construction will begin later this year. This segment is referred to as the I-4 Ultimate Section and will be reconstructed to include the addition of express lanes.
FDOT is updating the previously approved documents to extend the express lanes beyond the I-4 Ultimate section, from US 27 in Polk County to State Road 435 (Kirkman Road) in Orange County and from State Road 434 in Seminole County to State Road 472 in Volusia County. These 40 miles of I-4 have been further broken down into 5 segments shown here. Tonight we are focusing on Segment 3, from east of SR 434 to east of US 17-92 in Seminole County.
The I-4 Ultimate section will be under construction this year and is expected to be completed by the end of two thousand nineteen. The PD&E reevaluation studies of the extensions will be completed and Federal Highway approval is expected by the end of this year. The extensions will move into design, following approval of the environmental documents.
FDOT is doing this reevaluation in order to match the I-4 Ultimate section. The previous evaluation and documents assumed two high occupancy vehicle lanes in addition to the general use lanes. The current concept considers four express lanes. Many of the environmental regulations have changed and we’ll look at environmental aspects to make sure current guidelines are still met. Many of the pond locations that were previously vacant land, have been developed. New pond locations will be evaluated. The need for noise walls along the corridor will also be evaluated.
The PD&E reevaluation will address the addition of express lanes, access modifications, environmental and engineering aspects, public involvement and right-of-way evaluations.
There are no specific environmental concerns along the I-4 corridor at this time. A noise analysis is being performed to assess the impact associated with potential improvements. Any areas not meeting federal noise standards will need to be mitigated for. Impacts to wetlands and floodplains will also be minimized.
Several engineering aspects will be evaluated, including traffic, roadway geometry, structures, drainage and constructability.
The proposed typical section for the I-4 improvements is shown here. The typical section consists of four express lanes in the middle, three general use lanes on either side and one auxiliary lane between interchanges where needed.
What are Express lanes? Express lanes are an innovative solution to manage traffic congestion and provide choices to drivers. The express lanes will include variable toll pricing based on the level of congestion in the general use lane. This means the tolls goes up or down depending on the traffic volumes. The toll would be higher during peak periods when demand is greater and lower during non-peak periods when the demand is less. This helps maintain traffic flowing freely by monitoring the volume of traffic using the express lanes. Express lanes can provide more reliable travel options for motorists.
In the development of alternatives, practical design solutions were used to maximize traffic operations, minimize right of way impacts, maintain consistency with the I-4 Ultimate section, evaluated pond impacts and address potential environmental impacts. All alternatives followed the business rule variables for express lanes by maintaining direct access at interchanges with toll facilities, providing slip ramps for access and evaluating the conceptual signing plan that would be needed for the improvements.
Several alternative interchange concepts were developed for the US 17/92 interchange. A few are shown here. These and other concepts are also shown in more detail on boards throughout the room tonight.
A preliminary drainage analysis is being performed to determine the best viable pond locations. At this time, alternative pond sites have been identified, however no preferred sites have been selected yet.
Alternative design concepts for the Lake Mary Boulevard and US 17/92 Interchanges were evaluated and a summary of the evaluation is shown here. Display boards are provide here tonight for a closer review of the results of the analyses.
Public involvement is a very important part of the PD&E process. The I-4 PD&E study provides many ways for you to be involved and provide your input. The easiest way is to fill out a comment form at tonight’s meeting. You can also visit the study website at www.i4express.com. Here you will find contact information for the study team as well as information about the study. You can also send us your comments via email or traditional mail. The email address for Beata Stys-Palasz the FDOT project manager is included on the comment forms here tonight. We’re also available to meet with your group or organization.
We began this PD&E reevaluation study for Segment 3 in the Spring of 2013 and we expect it to be completed in the fall of 2014. The public hearing is scheduled to be held in the summer/fall of 2014. We expect to receive federal approval by the end of 2014.
The next activities are the public hearing, where we will present the recommended alternatives and receive final input from stakeholders final documentation and approval of the recommended alternatives from the federal highway administration.
If you would like to contact FDOT or the study team regarding the i-4 PD&E study you can contact the FDOT project manager or consultant project information liaison. Their contact information is provided here. We appreciate your interest in this important project. FDOT and consultant representatives are available to discuss the project with you and answer any questions you may have. Thank you for attending the I-4 PD&E study alternatives public meeting.