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A Stimulating Project

Work Begins on \$1.8-Billion Interstate 595 Express-lane Project

November 2009

By Debra Wood

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Concessionaire I-595 Express has begun working on the largest project in the history of the Florida Dept. of Transportation, the \$1.796-billion Interstate-595 Corridor Improvement Project in Broward County.



Photo: FDOT

From left: James Wolfe, district secretary for the Florida Dept. of Transportation, and Joe Borello, project manager with FDOT.



Photo: RS&H

Early work on the project. The entire project is scheduled for completion in 2014.

"This is such an important corridor in Florida, because I-595 connects the port, the airport, Florida's Turnpike, I-95, I-75 and the Sawgrass Expressway," says Joe Borello, FDOT project manager. "It has a huge economic impact with respect to traffic flow and the movement of goods."

Successful bidder ACS Infrastructure Development, the U.S. subsidiary of Group ACS in Spain, formed I-595 Express to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the 10.5-mi stretch of road for 35 years. The team will add three, reversible express, variable-toll lanes at grade in the median of the existing highway, from Interstate 95 to Interstate 75.

"Work in the United States is important for us, maybe the most important place you can do something like this," says Alvaro Muelas, CEO of I-595 Express. "This is the first project in Florida for us."

The express lanes represent about one-third of the cost of the project. Two-thirds of the work includes improvements to existing general-purpose lanes, reconstruction of entrance and exit ramps and 2.2 mi of Florida Turnpike north and south of I-595; installation of sound walls; and connection of a frontage road between Davie Road and State Road 7. There are 63 new, modified or replaced bridges.

"We would never have been able to build this without a public-private partnership," Borello says. "It would have taken more than 20 years to implement these improvements through conventional contracting methods."

The corridor handles about 180,000 vehicles per day. Most work will take place in off-peak hours with lane closures limited to nighttime.

"Doing this amount of work and maintaining an effective traffic-control plan and a safe highway during the construction period is among the most challenging [aspects] of the project," Borello says.

FDOT will purchase 10 diesel hybrid-electric buses for Broward County Transit and plans to begin an express-bus service during construction to ease traffic.

I-595 Express selected Dragados USA of New York as design-build contractor. GLF Construction Corp. of Miami...

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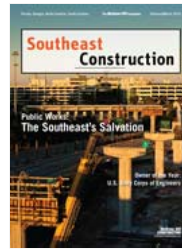
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...will build 17 bridges near the Turnpike interchange. Florida Structural Steel and Tampa Steel Erecting, both of Tampa, will provide approximately 20,000 tons of steel.



Images: RS&H

ACS Infrastructure Development, the U.S. subsidiary of Group ACS in Spain, formed I-595 Express to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the 10.5-mi stretch of road for 35 years. The team will add three, reversible express, variable-toll lanes at grade in the median of the existing highway, from Interstate 95 to Interstate 75.



Kailas Contractors of Hialeah Gardens, Fla., has begun site preparation and paving of sidewalks along the Broward County Greenways. Workers also have begun clearing and grubbing for sound-wall installation. I-595 Express expects lane construction to start by yearend.

RS&H of Jacksonville completed preliminary drawings and now serves as the corridor design consultant. I-595 Express and Dragados' design partner AECOM Technology Corp. of Los Angeles have modified the original plans.

"They are continuing refinement and have focused on maximizing use of the existing infrastructure," says Phil Schwab, vice president of transportation for RS&H. "There's less reconstruction and more milling and resurfacing, and some bridges we indicated needed to be replaced, they are able to save."

The team divided construction into nine zones.

"The structure of the schedule is related to the traffic-control plan and to minimize impact to the existing traffic," Muelas says.

By 2011, work will take place along the entire corridor, adds Paul Lampley, I-595 construction project manager for FDOT. The team currently employs 500 full-time workers and 300 part-timers. At peak, the team expects thousands of full-time workers will complete \$1 million in work per day along the corridor.

"It has been a huge economic benefit to all of South Florida," Lampley says.

FDOT set an 8.1% disadvantaged business enterprise goal. I-595 Express has concentrated outreach efforts on attracting such subcontractors from the local community. The project is scheduled for completion in 2014.

Useful Sources:

I-595 Corridor Improvements
<http://www.i-595.com>

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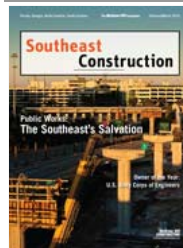
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