

International Drive Status Update (as of 1/2/2015)

Project Scope: Pave and widen approximately 5 ½ miles of roadway between SC Hwy 90 and River Oaks Drive (near SC 31 / Carolina Bays Parkway) in the fast-growing Carolina Forest area to provide an alternate evacuation route for area residents and to reduce congestion on US Hwy 501 between Conway and Carolina Forest / SC 31 / Carolina Bays Parkway.

Original estimated cost: \$6.5M (for two-lane roadway)

Updated estimated cost: \$16.5M (for four-lane roadway*; cost includes design, permitting, r/w, construction, CE&I, and wetland mitigation).
*Note: project will be advertised for bids as both a two-lane and a four-lane roadway (alternate bid) for the northern/western section between the power transmission lines and Hwy 90.

Original schedule: Begin construction 2012 / Completion 2013

Updated schedule: Permits expected in early 2015. Begin construction in 2015; completion expected one year after the start of construction

Project History:

November 2009 Design, right-of-way and permitting initiated

July 2010 Original "Contract for Sale" between SCDNR and Horry County was executed for the necessary right-of-way to construct the improvements along the north side of the proposed alignment.

County committed to implement several "mitigation items" including the construction of three animal crossings required by SCDNR as grantor of a right-of-way (R/W) easement for International Drive. A 2013 modification to the agreement that allowed for a market-value purchase of the R/W easement from SCDNR, and it also removed the animal crossings from the project scope along with the revision of other mitigation items (details described below).

2010 - 2014 Ongoing development of engineering plans, right-of-way acquisition, and preliminary environmental studies. Project schedule is pushed back due to the continued delays of higher priority projects within the sales tax program (SC 707 Widening and Glenn's Bay Widening and Interchange) and because of changes to the agreement with SCDNR in 2013. Original environmental permit application submitted in late 2013 and response to first round of comments submitted in 2014.

Current Status (as of January 2015):

- Design is substantially complete, right-of-way acquisition is well underway (over 60% complete), and the original environmental permit application was submitted in late November 2013 (public notice period expired on February 10, 2014).
- Comments on permit application received on May 7, 2014, and issues have been worked through directly with the agencies. Some comments required the installation of additional monitoring wells for the proposed off-site / permittee responsible mitigation; these monitoring wells did not perform as expected during the summer of 2014 and our formal response to comments were delayed as a result. Final responses to comments were sent back to the ACOE in late 2014 and were amended to include an updated wetland mitigation plan to purchase wetland credits from an approved bank (as the ACOE-required permittee-responsible mitigation).

- The local option sales tax program revenues and current project budget validation forecasts indicate that all projects in the program will be completed as planned (including International Drive).
- A revised intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between Horry County and SCDNR was approved by the SC Budget and Control Board on October 31, 2013. The revised IGA has allowed SCDNR to accept payment from Horry County at the appraised value of the right-of-way easement and it has reduced some of the requirements in the original contract agreement such that animal crossing structures are no longer required and standard SCDOT right-of-way fence can be used in lieu of the previously mandated 8' tall barbed wire fence.

Next steps:

- The ACOE has circulated Horry County's response to the environmental permit comments for review by the other agencies (that had provided initial comments on the county's original permit application). All agencies have been given until Feb 1, 2015 to submit any comments to the ACOE on the county's response. Permits are being sought for a four-lane roadway.
- Await response from ACOE that will indicate either 1) that there additional comments that need to be addressed or 2) that the receipt of environmental permit will be forthcoming (where the ACOE will indicate that they will proceed with the final draft of the Statement of Findings for issuance of the permit). Based on the 2/1/2015 date indicated above, this will not occur until later in February or sometime in March at the earliest – receipt of permit will be later than this if there are additional comments to be addressed.
- Conclude remaining design, permitting, and r/w acquisition activities prior to construction.
- Advertise project for construction bids and execute construction contract (expected during spring 2015 – this timeline is dependent on timely receipt of permits and is subject to change as discussed above).