



Florida Department of Transportation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Motorist news for weekend of April 24, 2009

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*Because of weather and other circumstances, the information contained in this release will occasionally change. For the latest information, check out the "closures/detours" section at www.myTBI.com. **ON SITE VISITS: Please contact us before parking in the construction zones so that we may help you find a safe location.***

Project news: Northbound I-275 from Himes Avenue to the Hillsborough River

Expect lane closures and LONG TRAFFIC DELAYS this weekend as traffic is shifted to new northbound I-275 lanes

TAMPA -- Traffic will be extremely slow the majority of this weekend on northbound I-275 in Tampa from the Westshore area to downtown Tampa as crews work to shift traffic to new northbound I-275 lanes adjacent to the existing highway.

Traffic impacts on I-275 will begin at 9 p.m. Friday (April 24) and are expected to be finished by 5:30 a.m. Monday (April 27). Here is what motorists can expect (with approximate times):

- 8 p.m. Friday to 8 a.m. Saturday: The Dale Mabry Highway entrance ramp to northbound I-275 will be closed. Drivers should use Lois Avenue or Howard Avenue to enter northbound I-275.
- 9 p.m. Friday: 1 to 2 (of 3) lanes will close on northbound I-275 from Lois Avenue (Exit 40B) to Ashley Drive/Scott Street (Exit 44).
- 9 p.m. Friday: The Ashley Drive/Scott Street exit ramps (Exit 44) will alternately be closed until 5:30 a.m. Saturday. Traffic will be detoured to whichever of these two ramps is open at the time.
- Early morning Saturday: Traffic will be shifted to the new I-275 northbound lanes. Only two lanes will be open until about 5:30 a.m. Monday. The Dale Mabry entrance ramp to northbound I-275 will also reopen early Saturday morning.
- All weekend: Traffic is expected to be very congested on northbound I-275 and likely on nearby local east-west roads such as Columbus Drive, Kennedy Boulevard, and Cypress Street. Motorists are encouraged to use alternate routes, particularly to avoid northbound I-275 and its anticipated heavy traffic congestion. The closures and detours used over the weekend are needed to build new pavement at a higher level at each end of the project where traffic currently is driving.

By Monday morning, traffic is expected to be flowing on the new alignment in three through-lanes. However, motorists will not have additional planned lanes or full lane and shoulder widths until this fall as additional widening must be done from Willow Avenue to west of Exit 44 . Until that widening is completed, northbound I-275 on the eastern end of this project will have two 11-foot lanes and a 12-foot middle lane. Trucks will be instructed to use the full-width middle lane. In addition, the **speed limit will be reduced to 45 miles-per-hour** until construction is completed.

The Himes Avenue entrance ramp is also planned to open to traffic Monday, April 27 (this ramp has been closed since December 1).

The most important news for motorists over this weekend is to avoid northbound I-275 if you can. If you cannot, plan at least an additional hour into your travel time. Traffic backups on the I-275 corridor will be extensive and likely will reach into Pinellas County.

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