

Work Along Busch Should Start In Fall

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NORTH TAMPA - The bids are in for the Busch Boulevard beautification project, but don't expect any improvements before the fall.

Time is needed to award the contract, complete paperwork in Tallahassee and negotiate a timetable for the winning bidder to begin work, said Kristen Carson of the Florida Department of Transportation.

She said the contract is likely to be awarded in mid-June.

The companies that have submitted bids are Pepper Contracting Services of Clearwater, \$9.49 million; R.E. Purcell Construction Co. of Largo, \$9.8 million; Ajax Paving Industries of Florida, \$9.9 million; APAC-Southeast of Wesley Chapel, \$10.2 million; and Lane Construction Corp. of Cheshire, Conn., \$10.3 million.

State highway officials have budgeted \$12.5 million for the project, which includes repaving a 4-mile stretch of Busch from Florida Avenue to 56th Street. A portion of the money will go to adding safety improvements and landscaping along the six-lane boulevard. The work will include the extension of medians on Busch, which will result in the reconfiguration of more than 30 intersections.

The contractor also will add decorative lighting, landscaping, new traffic signals and bricked crosswalks at Busch Boulevard and 56th Street in Temple Terrace.

The entire project is expected to take one year.

The city of Tampa and FDOT are continuing to negotiate with CSX Transportation to secure an easement to build sidewalks between North Boulevard and 14th Street.