



FDOT study explores Del Prado direct access to I-75

WINK News: March 4, 2019

It is talked about constantly, on the road and online, to provide direct access from busy Del Prado Blvd. to an even busier Interstate 75.

Jenna Givens said it takes her probably 45 minutes to drive from her front door to the Interstate. "In season it takes forever," Givens said. "The traffic on Colonial alone — it takes forever."

To decrease congestion, Florida Department of Transportation is studying connecting Del Prado to the Interstate. "It's something that we've looked at in the past," said Zachary Burch, an FDOT spokesperson. "In the past, we haven't been able to get it approved."

A study over five years, with a roughly \$10 million cost, is looking into future needs. These include potentially changing I-75 into 10 lanes and a Del Prado interchange.

It is something, due to development, FDOT said may happen.

"The amount of development that's happening around the Bayshore area with Babcock Ranch," Burch said, "it is certainly bringing more traffic to that Bayshore exit and that's really the one thing that if it does meet those criteria, that's what's going to help push it over the edge."

Back in 2001, Lee County purchased right of way as part of the Prairie Pines Reserve to help make the direct access possible. But change is likely to take about 10 years. "It would be a while," Burch said.

Reporter: Brooke Shafer
Writer: Michael Mora