

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY JANUARY 27, 2017 7:25 PM

# This highway project was on Trump's list — but it was already funded and ready to go



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Florida's transportation agency confirmed Friday that the only state project on a list of infrastructure improvements the Trump administration is thinking about backing — the reconstruction of Interstate 395 in Miami — is in fact already fully funded and ready to go.

The \$800 million, five-year project was fully funded as of the Florida Department of Transportation's 2014-2015 fiscal year budget, according to a document provided by the agency after a request from the Miami Herald. The document, a news release announcing the start of bids on the project, dates back almost a year. FDOT had said it was unable to produce the information when the Herald published a story on the project's inclusion on the list earlier this week.





## Senate Democrats unveil \$1 trillion infrastructure plan

Senate Democrats present a \$1 trillion infrastructure bill for the nation's roads, airports, bridges and seaports, which they say would create 15 million jobs over 10 years. Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) called on President Trump t

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The funding includes nearly \$194 million in federal highway money and \$403 million in state money. The federal funds were approved in April 2016, the statement says. In addition to a complete replacement of the functionally obsolete I-395, which connects Interstate 95 to the MacArthur Causeway, the project also includes improvements to a piece of I-95 and a stretch of State Road 836 that feeds into I-395.

The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, which manages SR 836, is contributing an additional \$151 million, according to the FDOT statement. MDX said its contribution comes from toll revenue.

The statement also notes the project is unlikely to qualify for additional federal money because it's considered fully funded. FDOT is now evaluating bids from six short-listed contractors and is close to awarding a design-build contract for the I-395 project, which is scheduled to begin construction at the end of this year.

FDOT and the office of Gov. Rick Scott have declined to say how the project ended up being considered by President Donald Trump for inclusion on his promised infrastructure initiative. Miami Herald parent McClatchy's Kansas City Star and News Tribune newspapers obtained a copy of the list, which was provided to the National Governors' Association by the Trump transition team. The Star also obtained another, more detailed document with an almost identical list of projects, circulated within the congressional and business communities, that also includes the I-395 project.

Including the shovel-ready project in his initiative could allow Trump to claim credit for the improvements and jobs that have been done regardless of the White House's occupant.



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