



## FDOT to Start Bus Pilot Project on I-275



The state is about to embark on a first-ever project dubbed the "I-275 Bus on Shoulder Pilot Project" that would allow buses to ride along the shoulder on the interstate.

Civil engineering group HNTB filed a modification request with the Southwest Florida Water Management District to implement a pilot bus on shoulder project along a five-mile segment of Interstate 275 from 5th Avenue N to Gandy Boulevard for intermittent bus use during rush hour.

"This segment has shoulders available that can accommodate bus and right now traffic on that segment is not as bad as some other parts of the interstate. This is a perfect location for the pilot," FDOT Modal Development Administrator Ming Gao told the Tampa Bay Business Journal.

He said FDOT is working with Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority for the pilot project, which will run its buses on the shoulder. The project is not part of any bus rapid transit

study, but is meant to look at how buses may better operate on the shoulder of an interstate.

"We haven't had a bus on shoulder project before on the interstate-highway. This will be the first in the state," Gao said. The department has set aside \$2.5 million for the project.

A design-build contract will be advertised in the summer for the project; the department is hoping that will be completed in a year so that the buses will test the shoulder sometime next year.

"Right now we're going through an assessment of the width and pavement conditions of the shoulder. There are rumble strips in the shoulder so if a bus rides on those rumble strips its rough; we may need to relocate the rumble strips and we need to figure out if we are adding width or enhancing the slope for shoulder," Gao said regarding the work that needs to be done.

Once the shoulder project is completed, the buses will be able to ride in it during certain conditions such as the traffic speed dropping below 35 miles per hour, and if the bus then moves onto the shoulder it can't go more than 15 mph faster than the speed of traffic.

Gao said projects like this have been done in places such as Minnesota; however, shoulders are wider there due to snow plowing purposes.

To Read More: <https://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2019/02/25/fdot-to-start-bus-pilot-project-on-i-275.html>



### About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.

### About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with FDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

# How to Win Construction Bid Proposals

## 3 simple steps to set your company apart from the competition



Everyone thinks the hard work in construction is in the actual building. But in fact, that's the fun part—it's what you signed up for when you first got involved in this industry.

The real grind happens before a single shovel ever hits the dirt: the construction-bid-proposal process, in which you essentially apply for jobs over and over again, only to get "laid off" at the end of each project, left to find another employer. It's a necessary part of the business, but that doesn't make it any more fun.

For general contractors, a bid-to-win rate of one out of six is standard, and some see worse returns than that. Roughly 83 percent of your bid-proposal time is spent on the drudgery of paperwork, and when a client chooses the lowest bid from a less-qualified competitor, it can be maddening. But, take heart; there are a few simple things you can do to set your bids apart from the pack and make your potential clients take notice.

### 1. Move Quickly

According to Honest Buildings, a capital planning and project management platform purpose-built for real estate owners, the median time it takes for the first bid to come in following a request for proposals is 8 days. That means there's more than a week's time between when the client begins to expect bids and when the very first contractor is able to talk to the client. This time gap is a huge opportunity for any construction business looking to win a bid. Obviously, crafting a bid proposal isn't like applying to a job ad on Craigslist. You first have to compile a huge quantity of data, measurements and budget figures to create a cohesive argument as to why the client should select you. That takes time. But take a good, hard look at your current timelines.

Then decide: If you really tried, could you shorten it?

If you could turn that bid proposal around in, say, 4 days, think about the tremendous advantage that would give you. You'd most likely be the very first bidder to reach the client's inbox. At this stage, clients are working through myriad questions in their minds—questions like, "Is this part of the project even feasible from an engineering standpoint?" and, "Is my cost expectation for the flooring reasonable?"

As soon as the client receives that first bid, they're looking to find the answers to those burning questions. If you're the first to move, your proposal becomes the standard by which they judge their project expectations. Don't underestimate the importance of this aspect of your proposal. It's a simple change that can have a gigantic impact on your ability to win bids.

### 2. Talk to the Client

Of course, being first won't keep you on top of the client's mental list forever. You must nurture the relationship you're building and keep redirecting the client's attention to your proposal. Don't worry about the client comparing other proposals to yours—you've already set the standard. Just keep "teasing" your potential client with more information at each stage of the process. Here are a few ways you can do that:

- Anticipate your competitors' bids—You probably have an idea of some alternatives your competitors might propose. Follow up with the client to discuss these alternatives and why your approach is superior. Otherwise, your potential client may give these alternatives equal footing with yours.
- Anticipate your client's concerns—Research past projects on which the client has been involved, as well as what sort of issues were most important. Or, even better, ask them outright. For example, if a previous contractor badly underestimated heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) costs, explain how your company will avoid committing the same mistake.

To Read More, See Excerpt: <https://www.constructionbusinessowner.com/technology/estimating/how-win-construction-bid-proposals>

## Supportive Services Offered



- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
- Mobilization Financing
- Bonding Assistance
- Marketing Plan Development
- Creating a Business Plan
- Building a Website



Within the past 3 months, CEI assisted DBEs in obtaining **\$6 MILLION in Bonding!!**

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