

By David Breen, Orlando Sentinel  
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## The long-delayed Poinciana Parkway is getting a boost from a new agency.

The proposed 10-mile toll road is a top priority for the recently formed Osceola County Expressway Authority, which discussed the road at a meeting Tuesday in Kissimmee. It would link Marigold Avenue in Poinciana to U.S. Highway 17-92 in the Polk County community of Loughman, bridging Boggy Creek and improving access to Interstate 4 for Poinciana's 80,000 residents.

It's a "shovel-ready" project, meaning that all rights-of-way have been purchased and permitting is complete, said Jeffrey Jones, the county's strategic initiatives director and the expressway authority's acting executive director.

Avatar, the main builder in Poinciana, contributed \$47 million to pay for land, permitting and engineering, and is pursuing updated traffic and revenue studies.

Jones said construction cost estimates range from \$90 million to \$130 million. Atlee Mercer, a former county commissioner and property appraiser who's the authority's chairman, estimated \$75 million to \$110 million, depending on how the project is broken down.

A timeline calls for the parkway to be completed in January 2015.

"It's an aggressive but doable goal," said Mercer. "It's conceivable that we could begin to move dirt in six months."

The expressway authority was created by the Legislature in 2010 and began meeting in June. Other board members are St. Cloud contractor William Folsom, Kissimmee funeral director Bob Healy Jr. and Noranne Downs of the Florida Department of Transportation. Two more spots have yet to be filled by Gov. Rick Scott.

The authority is also working on getting a \$2.5 million grant from FDOT. The money could go toward studying projects such as a connector at Boggy Creek Road and State Road 417 and an extension of Osceola Parkway toward the Medical City at Lake Nona, Jones said.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/osceola/os-osceola-xway-authority-2012\0110,0,5916814.story>