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Poinciana Parkway Stalled by Lack of Funding

The plan is to connect the planned road to County Road 54 and provide better access to Interstate 4 via County Road 532 or U.S. 27.

By [Tom Palmer](#)

THE LEDGER

Published: Wednesday, November 30, 2011 at 11:35 p.m.

BARTOW | Plans for another outlet for traffic-choked Poinciana will remain stalled until government officials can come up with a way to help Poinciana's private development company pay for it, a crowd of road supporters were told Wednesday.

However, where that financial help will come from is a little hazy, and even if it materializes, it's unclear how soon the road could be built.

The long-sought project is the Poinciana Parkway, a 10-mile, four-lane highway between Cypress Parkway and U.S. 17-92. It has been on the drawing board since the early 1990s, but didn't surface publicly until 2005.

The plan is to connect it to County Road 54, which was widened partly in anticipation of a future connection to the toll road, and to provide better access to Interstate 4 via County Road 532 or U.S. 27.

Tony Iorio, vice president of development at Avatar, the main developer in Poinciana, said the company had already spent \$47 million on the project, explaining an estimated \$110 million more is needed.

He said the original plan was for Avatar to build the entire project, but the economic recession killed that idea.

He was joined by P.K. Fletcher, executive vice president and general counsel for Avatar Holdings.

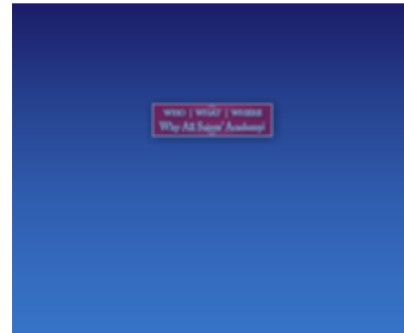
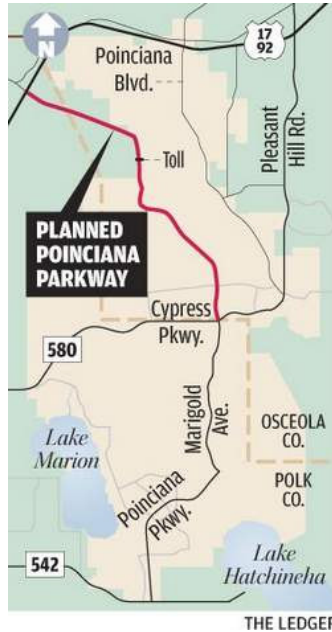
"We've taken it as far as we can," she said.

Fletcher said it's hard to say when work could start without guaranteed funding, adding there are some other complications.

One is the need for an updated traffic and revenue study that could attract some private funding to the four-mile section that will be where the toll facilities will be constructed. The rest of the route involves right of way along existing county roads in Polk and Osceola counties.

Fletcher said she and Iorio will come up with a tentative time line and present it when the committee meets again in February.

Meanwhile, it's still unclear where public money will come from.



It will require shifting money from other projects, but it's not clear which ones will be affected.

Polk Transportation Director Laurie Hayes suggested a further delay in the realignment of County Road 559A and reallocation of some transportation impact fee funds to improve the 1.5-mile section of the route in Polk County, which is Kinny Harmon Road.

Osceola Public Works Director David May said officials need to keep in mind the effect the road would have on other roads and intersections in the regional network, warning against trying to solve one problem by creating another.

Hayes suggested getting the Florida Department of Transportation involved in helping to redesign and improve the U.S. 17-92 intersection.

However, that will require a vote by the Transportation Planning Organization to readjust priorities in the five-year work plan.

Wednesday's meeting attracted a crowd of more than 30 people that included officials from Polk and Osceola counties, the Florida Department of Transportation, legislative aides, private consultants and Poinciana residents.

Fernando Valverde, a Solivita resident, said there is a core issue involved beyond all of the technical discussions about engineering and finance that dominated most of Wednesday's meeting.

"We're dealing with the needs of the people," he said, explaining there's a lot of anger and frustration in the community.

"A lot of people are waiting for some good news," he said.

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