



PRFSC June 2017 Meeting Minutes

On Monday June 26, 2017 PRFSC hosted Joedel Zaballero of Osceola County Traffic Operations and Jay Jarvis of Polk County Road and Bridge to provide a community update on the Poinciana Cypress Parkway Traffic flow study that both counties are working on.

Jay Jarvis started the meeting off by describing two Polk County projects that are being requested to be put into the budget for 2018 that we need the support from Poinciana residents at Polk County Commission meetings in order to make certain they get included in the new county budget. Those two projects are the widening of Lake Wilson Road between Ronald Reagan Pkwy and Osceola CR 532 by the Champions Gate Publix Plaza to handle the additional Poinciana Parkway traffic Flow and the expansion of Cypress Parkway to 4 lanes between Poinciana Parkway and Solivita Blvd. He stressed that the funding for these projects is being requested but the Poinciana citizens need to urge the Polk County Commission to approve the funding to support the Poinciana traffic situation.

Joedel Zaballero then spoke on the current status of the Poinciana Cypress Parkway Traffic Study which both counties are participating in but is primarily being done by Osceola County.

Joedel's first comments had to do with a basic introduction to the way current Poinciana Traffic Signals work. Everybody knows that a traffic signal cycle consists of a basic green, yellow and red signal duration with the possible addition of turning lanes. Poinciana traffic signals are pretty smart in that their timings can be adjusted for duration of Red, Yellow, Green and Turning lane signals. Those timings can also be adjusted based on time of day and day of the week. Thus allowing for larger traffic flows through the signals during week day rush hour traffic and shorter signal timings during off peak. The timing of when signals

change can be either fixed time based in each direction or based on a trigger when cars approach a main thoroughfare like Cypress Parkway from an intersection like Solivita Blvd. The signals are pretty smart so they can sense whether only one car or multiple cars are waiting to join from a side intersection and adjust the signal timing accordingly. While the Poinciana signals do have smart capabilities they do not offer the computer synchronization of signals that exist in cities like New York. Alas, Poinciana lies in unincorporated Central Florida and there will always be some limitations compared to what is possible in big metropolitan areas.

At the end of the day however the problem on Cypress Parkway is that in Poinciana there are about 47,000 cars each day trying to use Cypress Parkway which is a road currently constructed to be able to handle 24,000 to 28,000 cars each day. The problem is even made worse because 70% of the daily traffic uses the road during morning and evening rush hours. Too many houses in Poinciana and not enough roads. That is the bottom line and while traffic studies and signal timings can help, at the end of the day the only solution to the problem is more roads.

Hopefully by using the results of the traffic study and improving the timing among the traffic signals the situation can be improved.

What Joedel first described was a study done by Osceola County in 2015. That was a study of the traffic signal timings on the Osceola side of Poinciana that only looked at the signals between Cypress Branch and Southport road and only at the rush hour traffic peak periods. There is simply so many cars trying to go through Poinciana during those periods that the problem simply cannot be solved by better signal timing.

There is hope however, which is what the objective of the new study is all about. During non-peak periods of weekdays, nights and weekends, the traffic flow on Cypress Parkway is not that great that it cannot be improved with better signal timing. The first problem which is already being addressed is by including both

Polk and Osceola County in the study. While Poinciana is divided between villages 1,2 and 5 on the Osceola side and villages 3,7 and 8 on the Polk side the village 5 traffic has no way in or out of the village except through the Polk Side so you could study all the Osceola Traffic you want and because traffic from 4 of the six main Poinciana Villages comes from the Polk side you are not going to address the problem.

So what the present study is focused on will be looking at the Cypress Parkway non-peak rush hour traffic and synchronizing the traffic light timings to better allow smooth traffic flow along Cypress Parkway. The Cypress Parkway at Doverplum intersection will always be heavily utilized but even there Cypress Parkway flow could be improved by better synchronization of the other Cypress Parkway signals in both directions. Intersections such as Old Pleasant Hill Rd, Cypress Branch and Solivita Blvd could all be adjusted to smooth the traffic flow.

The traffic study is scheduled to be completed soon. The two county traffic engineering departments will then sit down and review the results and develop a plan to improve the situation. This is expected to happen in the August/September time period. They then will implement the planned changes. There is no expectation that the results will be optimal first time. This will be a trial and error process taking several months and several iterations so the public is asked to be patient and provide feedback and input.

In the meantime there is homework for the people of Poinciana to do if they want to see the Poinciana traffic situation improved. The first homework assignment is for everybody to get into their cars and head to Bartow for the Polk County Budget meetings. There are two road projects being proposed for the 2018 Polk County Budget that will help Poinciana. Project 1 is the widening of Lake Wilson Rd connecting Ronald Reagan /CR54 to Osceola CR 532 by the Publix Plaza at Champions gate. Anybody using Ronald Reagan off the north end of Poinciana Parkway to get to Disney or I4 has experienced that bottleneck. There is funding requested in the county budget to expand that road from two to four lanes. There is also funding requested in the county budget to expand Cypress Parkway between Poinciana Parkway and the Hospital to 4 lanes. To make this happen

these projects need to be approved by the Polk County Commission for the 2018 budget. The only way county money for Poinciana projects gets approved is when enough Poinciana people show up and make Poinciana's needs a priority at County Commission meetings. If we want our road problems fixed we need to show up at the meetings.

The second homework assignment for everyone living in Poinciana concerned about the traffic flow in Poinciana is to get into our cars and head to the Osceola County Commission meetings in Kissimmee. It was pointed out at the meeting that the base Poinciana traffic problem on Cypress Parkway is that we have 47,000 cars each day trying to get into and out of Poinciana using Cypress Parkway which is only designed to handle a maximum of 28,000 cars per day. This problem is very fixable. There is enough county owned right of way on both sides of Cypress parkway to expand that road from 4 lanes to 8. The only thing holding that back from happening is funding. The Osceola County Commission is simply not going to spend additional money for new roads for Poinciana unless people show up at the county commission meetings and demand it. We need Cypress Parkway expanded in Poinciana to handle the traffic volumes. Polk County is stepping up by spending money to expand roads at both ends of Poinciana Parkway. Osceola County needs to do the same. That is not going to happen unless Poinciana people show up at the county commission meetings.

Last but not least there are the Osceola Expressway Authority/ Central Florida Expressway Authority projects for the Southport Connector and I4 Connector projects. Those are long term projects. Like anything else they are not going to happen unless Poinciana people show up at the meetings.

To summarize, help is on the way to address the Cypress Parkway traffic flow situation with the signal timing study that is going on and will be completed and implemented soon. The results of that study can only do so much. To solve the problem additional help is needed from the counties and the expressway authorities . If the people of Poinciana want to obtain help to solve the Poinciana problems then the first thing they need to do is look in the mirror. These problems will not be solved unless a large number of people from Poinciana get

involved and make the needs of Poinciana heard to their county and state authorities. The solution to the Poinciana traffic problems depends on whether or not enough people are willing to become involved.

PRFSC would like to thank the speakers Jay Jarvis and Joedel Zaballero for coming to Poinciana and speaking at our meeting.