



My Conversation with news reporter

This week I had a conversation with a newspaper reporter about the Southport Connector project. The reporter raised concerns about several issues which I needed to correct him on. Here are the concerns and my rebuttal.

Project will divide Poinciana

‘Because the Southport Connector project will build an expressway through the center of Poinciana it will divide a community that is today homogeneous’.

Cypress Parkway was platted as the only east/west roadway serving Poinciana before any houses or businesses were constructed. Every house and business in Poinciana was constructed around Cypress Parkway with the understanding that the land was designated to be a highway. All properties adjacent to Cypress Parkway are contained in separate Poinciana Villages each having their own separate HOA. Cypress Parkway expressway construction will divide none of the existing Poinciana villages or subdivisions. In fact, Cypress Woods subdivision which is adjacent to Cypress Parkway on the north side is the second most upscale of any Poinciana subdivision second only to Solivita which is located to the south. The Association of Poinciana Villages and Osceola County recognize this. To say that building the expressway will divide Poinciana especially between neighborhoods having different property values is simply not true.

In addition Cypress Parkway today is a 4 lane divided highway between Marigold and Reedy Creek Bridge. It has a daily traffic volume exceeding 55,000 vehicles per day. Anybody crossing Cypress Parkway at anything other than a signaled intersection today is foolishly taking their life into their own hands. The proposed expressway will enhance the exiting intersections by adding overpasses leaving every existing intersection on Cypress Parkway the same only with less local traffic.

Alternatives to Cypress Parkway Segment

'There are alternatives available to building the expressway through Poinciana without building it on Cypress Parkway'.

This statement is false. The alignment of the Southport Connector Expressway has been studied multiple times since the year 2008. No study has ever identified a viable alternative to using Cypress Parkway. There are current suggestions to run the expressway north along Reedy Creek to either KOA or farther north as opposed to using Cypress Parkway. These suggestions have been rejected as not feasible. There are no wetlands permits to allow construction of an expressway along Reedy Creek and there is no possibility of such permits being obtained in the near future. Even if permits could be obtained the road would have to be constructed as a bridge because Reedy Creek and the surrounding neighborhoods are already classified by FEMA as a flood plain and anything impeding the flow of water through Reedy Creek would increase the flood danger to the nearby neighborhoods. The cost to construct a bridge of the length required would cause the price for building the expressway prohibitive.

Will make the Cypress Parkway local traffic worse instead of better.

The numbers prove this statement to be false. Today Cypress Parkway is a 4 lane divided highway between Marigold and Reedy Creek Bridge. The proposed Southport Connector expressway will extend Cypress Parkway to provide 4 local traffic lanes between the existing Poinciana Parkway and Reedy Creek Bridge. It will also add 6 additional express lanes with flyovers across all of the existing interchanges. There will be no blocking of any existing interchanges for local traffic. The projected traffic volumes at each of the existing interchanges in every case will be less in year 2045 if the expressway is built than if not built because thru traffic will have the option of using the expressway toll lanes.

In summary the arguments being used by the opponents of the Southport Connector do not stand up against the facts. The new expressway will not divide Poinciana, there are no viable alternatives to building the expressway on Cypress Parkway and the expressway will improve the Poinciana local traffic situation while significantly improving the through traffic situation flowing through Poinciana. Like any other expressway project there are those living adjacent to the expressway who object because they do not want the expressway built in their own back yards. This is unfortunate. But since the expressway was being proposed long before their homes were ever built they have no excuse for not knowing what was going to happen when they bought their homes. Poinciana has suffered through traffic problems long enough. The Southport Connector project needs to be approved and constructed as soon as possible.