

# Some Polk Road Projects to Be Done Sooner

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BARTOW | Construction of two new roads, trails, sidewalks and technology to alert motorists about fog and smoke on Interstate 4 will be included in the Florida Department of Transportation's five-year plan, the Transportation Planning Organization learned today.

Here are some of the highlights what's planned:

- \* The long-sought \$9 million extension of County Road 559 from south of Derby

Avenue to Recker Highway in Auburnale, which had been on hold since 2005 after being removed from the DOT budget because of fund shifts. It is scheduled for construction in the 2010-11 budget.

- \* The \$25.5 million six-laning of U.S. 27 from Cypress Gardens Boulevard to Dundee Road, which was originally scheduled for 2015, will now be scheduled for 2010.

- \* The \$51 million construction of the first leg of the Bartow Northern Connector from U.S. 98 to U.S. 17, which is scheduled for 2011-12.

- \* The \$1.7 million construction of a pedestrian bridge over Avenue T N.W. to improve the Chain of Lakes Trail in Winter Haven.

- \* The \$3.4 million system to alert motorists about fog and smoke along the section of Interstate 4 between the eastern leg of the Polk Parkway and the Osceola County line. It is scheduled for construction in 2013-14.

- \* The \$1.3 million Upper Peace Legacy Trail around the southern and eastern sides of Lake Hancock from Fort Fraser Trail, which is scheduled for construction in 2015.

Money saved because bids are more competitive right now has allowed the projects to be done earlier, said Stanley Cann, DOT District 1 director.

The fact that Polk projects were ready for construction helped, he said.

The construction program also includes the construction of a sidewalk along West Haines Boulevard from Nekoma Avenue to Pierce Street in Lake Alfred.

County Commissioner Ed Smith said he would like to come up with some way build additional sidewalks along Saddle Creek Road between Fish Hatchery Road and Tenoroc High School.

His comments were prompted by the recent death of a student who was struck while walking home from school Tuesday afternoon.

"There's nowhere to walk," Smith said. "I don't know how we can partner, but it's something we need to work on."

Lakeland City Commissioner Jim Verplanck said the road also needs to be widened and a traffic light is needed at the Combee Road intersection to deal with the truck traffic from the Saddle Creek Corporation facility nearby.

County Commissioner Jean Reed said another safety need is a pedestrian overpass over State Road 60 between Fort Fraser Trail and the main section of Bartow.

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