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Thurmon Tanner work to go to contract Oct. 17



The construction contract on the long-awaited final leg of the Thurmon Tanner Parkway is set to be awarded Oct. 17 in Atlanta.

The project goes forward in spite of the Georgia Department of Transportation's plans to reprioritize projects now on the books because of a deficit created by overspending on roadwork in recent years.

"We had already completed many of the preliminary steps, such as right-of-way acquisition and environmental studies," said Mark McKinnon, DOT spokesman, on Tuesday. "So, we were past the point of no return on this project."

State officials will examine the bids at DOT headquarters.

The four-lane Thurmon Tanner now runs between Spout Springs Road in Flowery Branch to Plainview Road in Oakwood. Another section of the road runs from Mundy Mill Road to Atlanta Highway.

The remaining four-lane leg will connect Plainview Road to Mundy Mill Road.

The project is estimated to cost \$9 million, according to the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Program.

Officials have said the project should be completed in 2010 to tie into the DOT's \$75 million reworking of Interstate 985's interchange with Mundy Mill Road.

That project involves widening Mundy Mill Road and Atlanta Highway and completion of a new I-985 interchange at Atlanta Highway.

Government officials have long envisioned Thurmon Tanner as Hall County's version of Gwinnett County's Satellite Boulevard, a four-lane road running mostly parallel to Interstate 85 and dotted on either side by large office buildings.

Oakwood City Council talked about the project at its Monday night meeting.

Councilman Gary Anderson asked City Manager Stan Brown whether he thought the DOT's freezing of projects would have any bearing on Thurmon Tanner.

"Not for us. Had we lost getting this project advertised this month, we would have been in with the rest of the projects," Brown said.

He also cautioned the council that the DOT might decide not to go forward based on the construction bids that are submitted.

"I've seen bids come in where DOT doesn't award a contract based on bids coming in too high or whatever," Brown said. "You never guarantee they'll actually award a contract, but the fact they're advertising it (shows) they've made a commitment for this project to go forward,"