

Suburban communities eager to see road extended

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Stacey Semmel is waiting for the day when the dead-end signs on Lyons Road disappear.

The suburban Boynton Beach resident lives in Canyon Isles, where the main entrance is off Lyons Road. Living near a major thoroughfare should make life easier, but that's only the case when Semmel drives north.

That's because Lyons Road stops just south of her community, and it doesn't pick up again until Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach.

Semmel, who commutes to Boca Raton every day for work, is forced to find alternative routes south, such as Florida's Turnpike, U.S. 441 or Jog Road.

"The inconveniences really add up," she said.

But that's supposed to change soon. Palm Beach County plans to seek bids in April on a project to extend Lyons Road from its current dead-end in suburban Boynton Beach to Atlantic Avenue, said Tanya McConnell, deputy county engineer. From Atlantic Avenue, Lyons Road continues deep into Broward County.

Construction of the two-lane, 3-mile extension, which is estimated to cost \$12.5 million, will take about one year to complete, McConnell said.

"It's going to save me time and money on gas and tolls," Semmel said.

The Lyons Road extension also will benefit residents of the other two Canyon communities, Canyon Lakes and Canyon Springs, which are adjacent to Canyon Isles. And GL Homes is building houses in Valencia Reserve, a 55-and-older community on the west side of Lyons Road, across from the Canyon communities.

Plans are under way to develop Delray Marketplace, a 318,000-square-foot shopping center, at Lyons Road and Atlantic Avenue. The anchor tenants, Publix and Frank Theatres, are just the beginning of what should be a long list of retailers and restaurants.

Palm Beach County is requiring the project's developer, Kite Realty Group, to pay for the first 900 feet of construction for the extension of Lyons Road near the project site, McConnell said.

John Tisci, president of the Canyon Lakes homeowners' association, said the Lyons Road extension will provide residents with easy access to Delray Marketplace.

"We really don't have any place for entertainment nearby," he said. "I'm looking forward to it."

He also said the extension will be especially convenient for students in the Canyon communities, who have been zoned for Olympic Heights High School in suburban Boca Raton, which is on Lyons Road.

The only concern he has heard from residents about the extension is that it might increase traffic on Lyons Road. But Tisci isn't worried because he hasn't seen high traffic levels to the north on Lyons Road.

The Coalition of Boynton West Residential Associations, which represents 88 communities west of Boynton Beach, has been in support of the project for many years.

"It'll be really helpful to many of our residents," said Ken Lassiter, president of the coalition.