

The wrong time for roads to nowhere

July 9, 2020



Free photo from Wikipedia.

To this title we could add there never is a right time for roads to nowhere. This idiotic and ill-conceived plan is designed only to make money for a few people and to allow a huge development in Taylor County. There is no established need for these roads as current corridors can be widened to accommodate evacuation routes. This plan is based only on the political greed of a few who care nothing for the environment.

This is a horrible idea at an even worse time.

This is the only link [the Sun](#) provides to this article.

Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

EDITORIAL

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The Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Before, during and – someday, we hope – after the COVID-19 pandemic, Florida's most challenging unmet need remains the same: attainable workforce housing.

This was supposed to be the golden year when the state's Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund would be spared a legislative raid on its resources, which are collected from real estate transactions. A generous \$340 million was specifically allocated to the construction of lower-cost housing in Florida. Not enough, but certainly an advance.

Then came the coronavirus retreat: When Gov. Ron DeSantis trimmed the Legislature's budget by \$1 billion on June 29, in a preliminary nod to new realities, he tucked \$225 million back into the fund.

The fate of that money is undetermined, probably until the Legislature reconvenes to make more budget cuts, which the dominant Republican Party prefers to delay until after the November election. But one thing is certain: That \$225 million won't be out circulating in the economy, building houses for working families, anytime soon.

Contrast this cutback – which can certainly be defended – with

DeSantis' recent decision to commit more than \$700 million to his dream of three fabulous new highways that will take us where almost nobody wants to go. This superfluous toll road project cannot be defended, and if ever there were a time to pack such an overweening gambit on ice, that time is now.

"A toll road to nowhere is not going to benefit anyone in 2020. It just isn't," Rep. Evan Jenne, D-Dania Beach, told the Tampa Bay Times....

Clearly there is money to be made here – for land speculators, litigators and engineering firms. But bear in mind that the people of Florida may never see any actual pavement laid. And the estimated \$117 million that is funneled into this political aspiration in 2020 alone could evaporate like exhaust fumes, when it could have gone for, say, affordable housing.

Environmental concerns about tolls roads crisscrossing rural Florida, including their hazards for panther habitats, got little traction in Tallahassee. But they might fare better in court, and could hold up such projects for years.

Even more likely: With costs already bloated and a clear estimate of the billions needed to build these roads nowhere in sight, plus a profound lack of public support, this not-great notion appears destined to suffer an ugly political death in Tallahassee.

Or so we hope.