

The Palm Beach Post

REAL NEWS STARTS HERE

Economic engine or traffic gridlock — where is Indiantown Road going?

By [Bill DiPaolo](#) - Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Posted: 12:36 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6, 2014

JUPITER —

New restaurants. A luxury movie theater. A gated community with 275 residences, retail and biotech. A bigger gas station. A new medical office building. A \$150 million entertainment center. More retail. All these are being built and proposed on Indiantown Road, the town's main east-west roadway. The road starts at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre on State Road A1A and goes west about a dozen miles past Florida's Turnpike to the Beeline Highway. In between are local places like Average Joe's Pub to auto dealerships to giant retailers such as Wal-Mart.

Some northern Palm Beach County residents fear that traffic will overwhelm the mostly six-lane roadway. The determination many had to make Indiantown Road a tree-lined main street has lost out to strip shopping centers, big signs and overburdened intersections, said Phil Cipolla, a member of the town's Planning and Zoning Commission. "We didn't want Indiantown Road to become another Northlake Boulevard. With all this new construction, that dream is slipping away. Indiantown Road is getting junkier and junkier and junkier," Cipolla said.

But Rebel Cook, a north county commercial property Realtor who is the agent for a 2-acre vacant parcel on Indiantown Road near Town Hall, said Indiantown Road is a future economic engine for Jupiter. "If I had five properties on Indiantown Road, I could sell them right now," Cook said. The fact that there is little undeveloped land on the town's main road to and from the beach makes the property valuable, Cook said. As that inventory shrinks, the properties with older buildings will be redeveloped, said Cook, whose office is off Indiantown Road near Wal-Mart. "The traffic is not that bad. The complainers are old-timers who don't want growth or development. But they have to understand that development brings revenue to businesses and tax dollars to local government," Cook said.

Efforts are being made to relieve traffic. The town is acquiring property to build Island Way South, a reliever road to take drivers from Indiantown Road just east of Interstate 95 south to the Jupiter Park of Commerce and to Central Boulevard. Construction is planned in the next several years. Building a road connecting Florida's Turnpike and I-95, eliminating the need to use Indiantown Road, also is under consideration.

And much of the new construction — Braman, Fresh Market, Chasewood Plaza — is infill. Those projects replace existing development and will not add more traffic, said Planning and Zoning Commission Vice Chairman Patrick Rutter. "It's not additional square footage. It shows the viability of Indiantown Road," Rutter said. But the additional development still makes Indiantown Road destined to become the most congested arterial roadway in Palm Beach County and a virtual parking lot during peak-hour traffic periods,

Councilman Jim Kuretski said. "Projections for traffic on the segment of Indiantown Road between Center Street and Central Boulevard indicate that it could be operating at a whopping 50 percent above capacity in 20 years. That traffic level represents gridlock and will be intolerable," Kuretski said.

North county residents can expect a boost in traffic in the fall when Harbourside Place opens. The \$150 million complex features a 179-room hotel, a marina, an outdoor amphitheatre, shops and restaurants with outdoor seating. The parking garage has room for about 950 vehicles. There will be more traffic in the spring when Wal-Mart finishes its expansion to add a full grocery store to the building at Center Street. Bramer BMW has started work on a new 18,000-square-foot service and sales building and a parking garage on the 3-acre property on the north side of Indiantown Road, just east of Center Street. Public parks are planned on Indiantown Road at Jones Creek and Center Street. To the west, the 275-unit Lakewood development is scheduled to start construction at the northwest corner of Indiantown Road and Florida's Turnpike. The DiVosta project includes a restaurant and a pharmacy, as well as 150,000 square feet of biotech.

Currently, daily traffic figures on Indiantown Road reach or surpass 50,300 capacity between Center Street west to I-95. The highest daily figure is about 60,000 between I-95 and Island Way. Other sections of the road are below capacity, according to town and county figures. While those low traffic figures for Indiantown Road west of Jupiter are good news to Jupiter Farms resident Bill Thomas, he wonders how long it will last. "There is a ton of traffic now, especially during rush hour," said Thomas, who owns West Jupiter Camping Resort in Jupiter Farms off Indiantown Road, about 5 miles west of Florida's Turnpike. "More building will only make the traffic worse."