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## City moves ahead with parkway

### Council OKs \$1.4M land purchase

*BY KIMBERLY C. MOORE  
FLORIDA TODAY*

PALM BAY -- The Palm Bay City Council voted unanimously Thursday evening to spend \$1.4 million on 160 acres to help create the long-planned and long-awaited Palm Bay Parkway.

"This is a great beginning, these two purchases," said council member Milo Zonka.

He is set to travel to Washington, D.C., in the spring to lobby Congress for more funds for the project.

The \$1.4 million is coming from transportation impact fees, which are already in the bank.

The purchase of the land from Lennar Home Builders and Bombardier Recreational Products is contingent on an appraisal. City officials say they are getting a bargain-basement price, at an average \$10,000 an acre.

The purchased land will help create part of the right of way for the parkway.

The parkway is planned as a four-lane road that designers hope will alleviate traffic on Interstate 95 and Babcock Street.

There is currently no funding to begin construction, but once the roadway is completed, it will connect South Brevard near Micco Road to Eau Gallie Boulevard in Melbourne. The road, referred to outside of the city as the St. John's Heritage Parkway, will run south of the current boundaries of Palm Bay and west of Interstate 95.

Despite the slump in the current housing market, Palm Bay officials are expecting another building boom when the market picks up again. Areas in southern and western Palm Bay have planned developments in the works. Developers and officials say the parkway is necessary.

The estimated cost for the 19 miles of the project in the Palm Bay area currently comes in at \$110 million to \$130 million.

An additional \$35 million to \$40 million will be required to build an interstate interchange near Micco Road, including design, right-of-way acquisition and construction.

More funding will be required for the portion north of U.S. 192 and a second interchange at Ellis Road.

"The parkway has not been designed yet, so these costs may change significantly as design details get more defined," said Palm Bay Deputy City Manager Sue Hann.

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