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Our views: Parkway purchase

Palm Bay's land buy for long-delayed roadway keeps pushing boulder uphill

Brevard County has more than a half-billion dollars in unmet road projects, and few are more badly needed than the St. Johns Heritage Parkway.

Formally called the Palm Bay Parkway, the connector would loop south of Palm Bay and west of Interstate 95 to alleviate worsening gridlock and provide an important link in Central Florida's expanding road network.

But money for the project remains scarce with the price tag now approaching an estimated \$225 million.

Still, steps should continue to be taken to push this boulder uphill, and the Palm Bay City Council took one Thursday when members agreed to spend \$1.4 million in already collected transportation impact fees to buy land for right of way.

It's the right move at the right time with depressed land prices allowing the city to purchase the parcels for a bargain basement \$10,000 an acre.

Finding the funds to construct the road will be difficult in today's bleak budgetary climate, and state and federal money will be required to make it reality.

But Palm Bay and county officials, along with others, are smart to keep pressing ahead because when growth returns to the Space Coast, the South Brevard area will boom with new developments again.

And the parkway will be more needed than ever.
