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City to vote on parkway lobbying

BY KIMBERLY C. MOORE
FLORIDA TODAY

The Melbourne City Council plans to vote Tuesday on working with the city of Palm Bay to lobby Congress, seeking funding for the proposed St. Johns Heritage Parkway.

The two councils came to a tentative agreement last week to work together on pushing for the roadway that would connect the NASA Boulevard corridor to the parkway west of Interstate 95. It then would run south to the western outskirts of Palm Bay, then turn east to a planned I-95 interchange in the Micco area.

Palm Bay voted 3-2 to approve a list of priorities. Those priorities include, in this order, getting the money for:

- The two interchanges.
- The stretch between Malabar Road and U.S. 192.
- The stretch between Ellis Road and U.S. 192.

Palm Bay Mayor John Mazziotti and council member Kristine Isnardi voted against it. Isnardi said she did not want a priority list given to Congress, because she wants the entire project funded, not pieces of it.

Building two interstate interchanges is estimated to cost \$30 million to \$40 million each, while building the roadway is estimated at \$200 million.

But that doesn't include required project development and environmental studies on the parts of the parkway that will be funded with federal dollars. Nor does it include right-of-way acquisition.

The parkway is needed to reduce traffic congestion on Interstate 95, Babcock Street, Eau Gallie Boulevard and Sarno Road for the more than 25,000 people working in the NASA Boulevard corridor, Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization Director Bob Kamm said.

Palm Bay City Councilman Milo Zonka, along with Melbourne City Councilman John Thomas, hope to go to Washington in the next few months to lobby Congress on the project.

Contact Moore at 409-1423 or kmoore@floridatoday.com.

Additional Facts

If you go

The Melbourne City Council meets at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at 900 E. Strawbridge Ave.
