

I-95 interchange a plus

Connection near Micco might boost economy

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VIERA — -- Construction of a new Interstate 95 interchange near Micco Road will spur [economic development](#) and improve vehicle access across a sizable surrounding region, transportation officials believe.

"This interchange, we're finding, rearranges the traffic in south Brevard -- anything from Malabar south, even into north Indian River County," said Bob Kamm, director of the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization.

"The presence of an interchange, where there is not (one) in a 17-mile stretch, really causes traffic to go about in different ways," Kamm said.

Thursday morning, TPO officials received updates on the project, which may someday serve as the southern terminus of the long-discussed St. Johns Heritage Parkway. This controlled-access highway would swing west of I-95 and loop northward, linking with a second interchange at Ellis Road in Melbourne.

The proposed southern interchange site is just south of the Grant-Valkaria town limits at I-95 Milepost 6.1, roughly 2 miles north of Micco Road.

Also included in the Florida [Department of Transportation](#) project: Construction of a 4-mile connector road, bending around the borders of the 1,322-acre Micco Scrub Sanctuary. This road would link the interchange with Babcock Street and Micco Road.

Public input will be collected during meetings in

late August and early March, DOT records show. A design study may wrap up next June. Construction remains years off.

Kamm said the interchange will help Brevard County Fire Station 86 near Barefoot Bay respond faster to I-95 accidents -- today, ambulance crews

have to travel up to Malabar Road to access the interstate.

Study also continues on the St. Johns Heritage Parkway northern interchange at Ellis Road, immediately south of Lamplighter Village. That project will also widen Ellis to four lanes, providing straight-line access from I-95 to Melbourne International Airport.

Lance Decuir, DOT [project manager](#), said widening Ellis Road eastward to Wickham Road will pose engineering obstacles.

"There are 60 side street-driveway connections, which will be major issues for the life of the project," Decuir said. "Deep ditches along the edge of the roadway there. Tight right-of-way there."

Design work may wrap up within two years, and right-of-way acquisition could be finished four years, Decuir said.

The Legislature earmarked \$4 million for St. Johns Heritage Parkway development in its newly adopted budget, said Leigh Holt, county government relations manager.

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