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Cape plan would open parking lanes to commuters

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The Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Agency on Tuesday refined its proposal to increase Cape Coral Parkway to six lanes for morning commuters.

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Under the updated proposal, weekday drivers could use the eastbound curbside lanes now reserved for parking from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

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The original proposal, passed July 24, had not defined the morning commute hours. More than 48,000 vehicles use the Cape Coral Bridge at the east end of Cape Coral Parkway every day.

Chairman John Jacobsen said the proposal needed to be more clear. He said he supported the plan, citing cities like New York City as examples of how the system could work.

Director Suzanne Kuehn said this plan would be a good test case for the city.

"I think it's worth checking out and it would be easy to enforce," she said.

Scott Hertz, president of Powell Construction, gave the only no vote on the proposal.

The agency had agreed to support six lanes of traffic on Cape Coral Parkway at its July 10 workshop, at which discussion was not binding. At that time, the group had not limited those six lanes for use by morning commuters.

Hertz, who was not present at the July 24 meeting but was present at the July 10 workshop, said he did not completely understand the updates or the July 24 proposal.

"But I'm not necessarily in opposition," he said.

Many businesses along Cape Coral Parkway have "nose-in" parking, where cars can pull directly off the street and into a spot. This could create a safety problem as drivers back out of those spots and into traffic.

But Stephen Slosburg, co-owner of Stephen Todd Home Furnishings & Accents at 866 Cape Coral Parkway, said that shouldn't be a problem, given the hours drivers

are allowed to use the curbsides as traffic lanes.

“Most of the retail stores don’t open until 10 anyway,” he said.

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