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Parking ban on parkway touted

Cape panel seeking downtown traffic fix

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Cape Coral Parkway traffic will move more quickly and smoothly if parking is eliminated east of Coronado Parkway, the city's downtown redevelopment board said Tuesday.

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But the city should move carefully toward expanding the parkway, the board agreed.

The board voted 6-0 to recommend a test that will change the parkway to three lanes eastbound during the morning rush hour and westbound during the evening rush. The recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

"Six-laning is inevitable," board Chairman John Jacobsen said.

A full-time switch to six lanes was recommended by the city's transportation staff, based on a traffic circulation study of the downtown district.

"We're a city that has traffic surges twice a day," member Don Heisler said.

Not everyone agrees.

"We don't need to go to six lanes now. I think it will all work out in its own time," said board member Rich Greer.

A half-dozen businessmen told the Community Redevelopment Agency board that they opposed six-laning the parkway the entire day. The six

lanes should be available only during the morning and afternoon rush hours, they said.

Jack Quilty, owner of downtown's Cape Dog & Deli said he'd rather put in some crosswalks so people can get to the other side of the parkway. Add some plantings and benches, he said.

"We've got to make a good impression. We've got to slow the traffic down a bit," Quilty said.

"Don't turn it into a freeway," said Tom Tomich, who has an antiques business on the south side of the parkway. "My business would all but shut down if this six-lane proposal goes through," Tomich said.

Additional time is needed to study the impact of Lee County's one-way toll plan, said Dolores Bertolini, a city councilwoman.

Lee County plans to charge drivers going to Cape Coral a \$2 toll when they come over the bridge. Drivers leaving the city would not pay a toll. The idea is to ease congestion in the morning by making it easier to leave the city.

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