

Brevard transportation planners support rail-trail conversion in North Brevard

Written by

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VIERA — Brevard County officials are pushing the pedals to begin building a bicycle-pedestrian trail along old railroad tracks in Titusville and Mims.

Thursday, the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization unanimously approved a strategy aimed at accelerating "rail-to-trail" construction between downtown Titusville and Glenn Road, roughly a mile north of State Road 46.

Specifically, the TPO asked the Florida Department of Transportation to combine \$4.5 million in future funding so design work and construction can proceed at the same time, Executive Director Bob Kamm said.

Stretching 6 miles, the project would be divided into two phases:

- Canaveral Avenue to Chain of Lakes Park (2.25 miles) — \$1.5 million
- Chain of Lakes Park to Glenn Road (3.5 miles)

The downtown segment would be scheduled to begin in 2011-12, followed by the northern segment in 2013-14. "Volusia County is considered a partner in this, and they are going (ahead) with construction of their trail. Eventually, these trails will join up," Commissioner Robin Fisher said. In 2007, DOT purchased 51 miles of old Florida East Coast Railway property in the bordering counties for eventual conversion into bike-ped trails. Cost: \$16 million. Kamm said Thursday's proposal would build half of Brevard's trail between Titusville and the Volusia border. There's no funding for the remainder. Titusville Mayor Jim Tulley was scheduled to talk about the trail Thursday, but Kamm said he had to unexpectedly leave town. In related news, Kennedy Space Center Director Robert Cabana gave initial approval last week to design the Sea Loop Trail, which will wind across the northern border of the NASA facility. The Sea Loop Trail

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-- which will connect with the rail trail
-- will cross the new A. Max Brewer Bridge and follow State Road 3 along the barrier island, said Leigh Holt, TPO program manager. This trail will eventually lead to Maytown Road in Volusia."KSC will not be able to fund the study, construction or maintenance of the bike trail," Cabana wrote in a letter to Fisher. "KSC staff, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, can assist with the siting, environmental impacts and easement concerns associated with the trail."DOT has budgeted \$450,000 to design the Sea Loop Trail, Holt said. **Contact Neale at 321-242-3638 or rneale@floridatoday.com.**