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Les Gruen of Colorado's Transportation Commission, on the proposed Jefferson County Parkway

State panel OKs new study for toll road

The proposed Jefferson County road's impacts on traffic and the environment will be examined.

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By Karen E. Crummy *The Denver Post*

Backers of the proposed Jefferson County parkway cleared their first hurdle Thursday when Colorado's Transportation Commission gave them the go-ahead to conduct further studies and environmental analysis on the potential impact of the toll road.

Members of the 11-member commission acknowledged the controversy surrounding the proposed road but said their decision — which was unanimous — should not be read as giving approval to the parkway project.

“This is the beginning of the journey, not the end of it,” said commission member Les Gruen.

More detailed traffic-impact and environmental studies also must be done, the commission determined, at the three primary intersections where state roads would intersect with the proposed toll road, which would run from Colorado 128 near Interlocken Loop to Colorado 93 near West 64th Avenue Parkway.

After years of political posturing and regional infighting, further analysis may finally provide concrete answers to the questions that remain, said commission member Jeanne Erickson.

“I don't believe we're well-served debating the issue at this level anymore,” she said.

The next hurdle faced by the Jefferson

Parkway Public Highway Authority, the force behind the project, is to get the Denver Regional Council of Governments to sign off on parts of its plan, including the financial details. The authority, made up of representatives from Broomfield, Arvada and Jefferson County, is expected to present the issue next month.

It also intends to have a private partner for the project sometime in the fall.

During the Transportation Commission meeting, the city of Golden, which has long opposed the toll-road idea, unsuccessfully tried to get commissioners to delay making a decision for another month because its planners had received relevant documents only Monday.

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