

## 4-mile spur TR in Fredericksburg VA advances

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**FREDERICKSBURG TOLL ROAD | VIRGINIA**



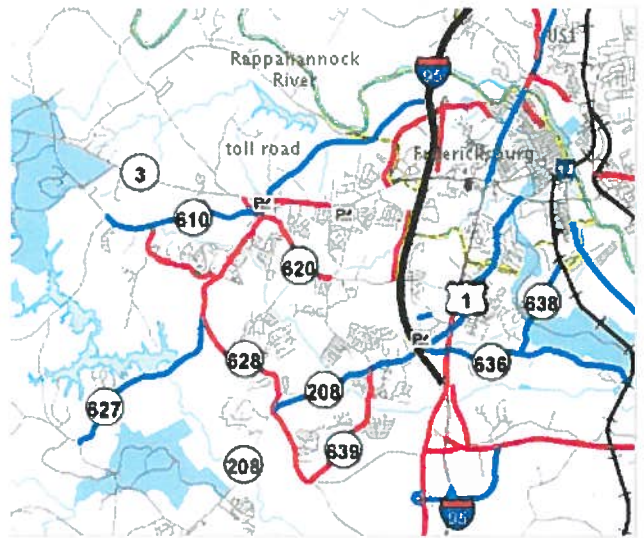
Lloyd Robinson director of transportation at the Fredericksburg VA metro plan organization (FAMPO) says he's hopeful they can put together the permits and financing for a 6km (3.5 mile) long spur tollroad off I-95 just south of the Rappahannock River. The proposed pike is designed to:

- provide direct connections to a major resort and retailing complex called Celebrate Virginia being developed by the Silver Companies, and
- make a freeflow connection for western residential areas and to the famous Chancellorsville Battlefield national park on Route 3.

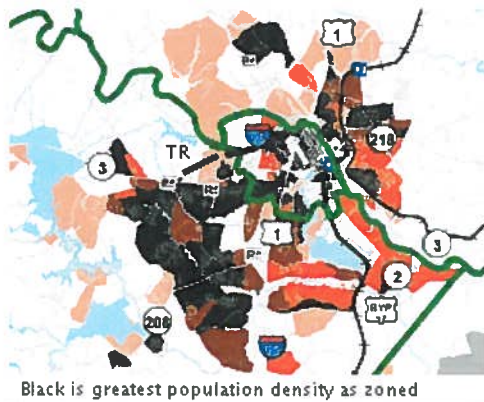
We'll call it the Silver/3 Pike or S3 Pike.

A feasibility study by Michael Baker company is in the final stages of being written up, and Robinson tells us, it shows the project costing in the range \$200m to \$250m and that with a \$1.00 toll it's capable of generating \$15m to \$20m/year in toll revenues within a few years of opening.

Together with about \$60m of already committed funds and contributions from the Silver Companies and other major property holders, and some contribution from the Transurban-Fluor toll lanes on I-95 Robinson says it's looking a feasible project near-term.



"There's strong latent demand (for the pike) now," says Robinson.



Black is greatest population density as zoned

The S3 Pike will save drivers fifteen minutes, he says, as compared to their present trips along the Route 3 signalized arterial - a busy shopping street and one of the most congested roads in the area. Residential growth is being channeled into an area to the southwest a bit beyond the end of the proposed tollroad. (see population density map nearby)

An important move to facilitate the S3 Pike is legislation recently introduced in the state house to authorize a local toll authority. HB2099 introduced by Delegate Robert Orrock is:

"George Washington Toll Road Authority. Creates a toll road authority encompassing the City of Fredericksburg and the County of Spotsylvania for the purposes of alleviating highway

congestion, promoting highway safety, expanding highway construction, increasing the utility and benefits and extending the services of public highways, including bridges, tunnels and other highway facilities, both free and toll, and otherwise contributing to the welfare of the Commonwealth (state) and the George Washington Region." (NAMING - see end)



The bill has passed the house transportation committee.



Robinson said HB2099 is the enabling legislation needed for the S3 Pike and he hopes it will allow the regional toll authority the option of either a toll concession P3 or a public toll financing. It has some way to go before becoming law, since it needs to pass the full house and the senate.

### Challenges

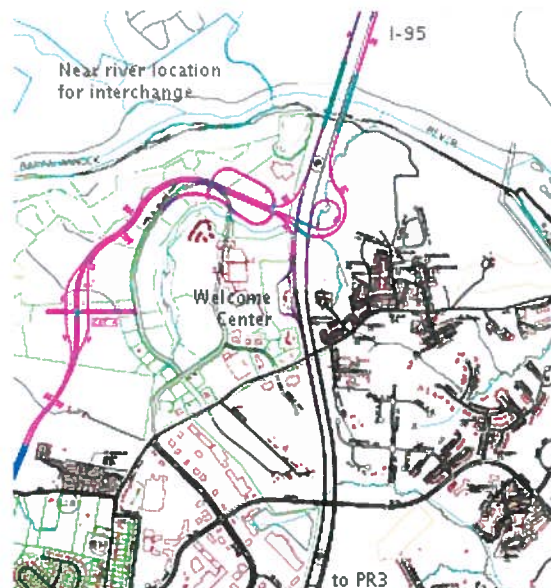
The project has other challenges.

The I-95 interchange is difficult to design because there is only 2 miles (3.2km) between the Rappahannock River and the existing Route 3 (Plank Road 3) interchange. An interchange design in about 2000 involved adding 4 lanes with to the bridge over the Rappahannock River to accommodate collector-distributor lanes together with direct connector ramps to the toll express lanes planned for the median of I-95. The interchange alone was costed at around \$500m.

Robinson says this was "overdesigned" and that a more modest design - a classic trumpet - costing less than half the cost will provide good service. The feasibility study by Michael Baker company will also be an Interchange Justification Report needed to get FHWA approval.

### Two alternatives for IC location - MP131 or MP132

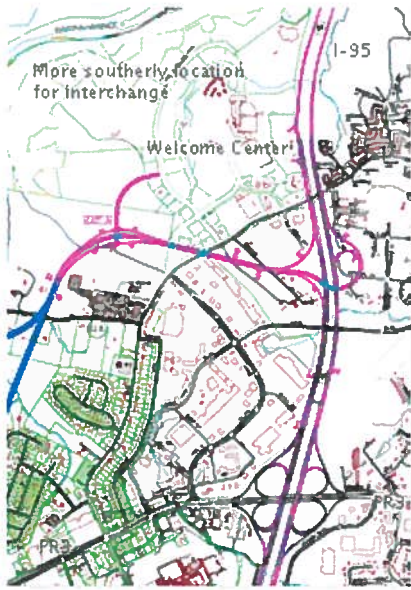
At this stage they are still weighing up two alternatives - a northerly location (MP132) close enough to the river to require some widening of the river bridge but not requiring adjacent interchange modifications, and a location half a mile south. The southern location (roughly MP131) wouldn't require widening of the river bridge but it would require extra auxiliary lanes through the Route 3 interchange and extra bridgeworks over surface arterials.



### Skeptics

Ron Utt a transportation specialist at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC and a Fredericksburg resident doesn't think there will be the traffic to justify the cost of the project. He says fierce anti-growth sentiment is promoting

restrictive zoning, especially at the end of the tollroad. In that area civil war buffs want most of the land between Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville kept rural as part of an enlarged battlefield national park.



Utt describes the project as mostly corporate welfare on behalf of the Silver Companies resort and retailing developments which have been struggling financially.

Bill Beck, mayor of Fredericksburg 2000-2004, now a bookseller and antiques dealer told us he wrestled with the project during his term. He says the location of the Silvers' Celebrate Virginia development has turned out to be a business mistake because of the difficulty of providing access off I-95. He doesn't think that the interchange between the river and Route 3 will work.



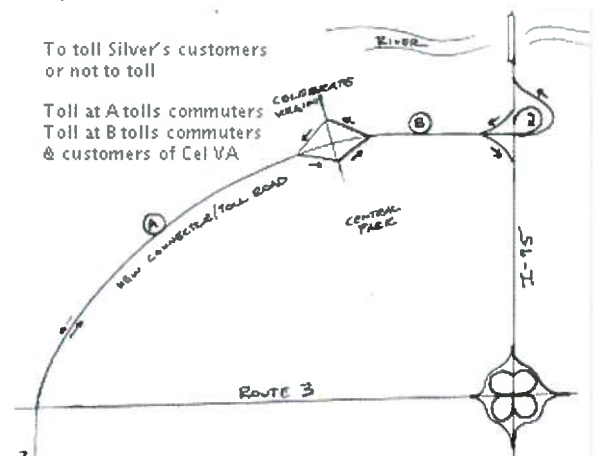
He argues that the planned suburban development along and south of Route 3 out west will better be served by an improved interchange on I-95 at about MP126 where US1 crosses under the interstate. Although it wouldn't help the Silver Companies it would provide improved access for western Route 3 at less cost and with less difficulty.

### Tolling locations major issue

The initial concept was for tolls only on traffic continuing on Route 3 west of the Celebrate Virginia and other shopping areas. That seemed to play into the criticism that the whole project was corporate welfare. Commuters and tourists going to the battlefields would pay all the tolls. That's called Toll Location A in the feasibility study.

Although it hasn't been rejected yet, at the MPO Lloyd Robinson seems inclined to recommend a toll point that tolls resort/retail traffic to the Silver developments as well as the commuters and civil war buffs - called Toll Point B (see sketch).

Toll revenue is projected as about 50% higher putting the toll point close to I-95 and collecting from all the traffic.



**COMMENT:** this does seem the most direct route to serve the western part of the area and the battlefield sites if the interchange on I-95 can be made to work. But we'll reserve further judgement until we see the feasibility study, except to say that since most of the expense is in the I-95 interchange the toll should toll all traffic using that interchange. Exempting retail/resort traffic from a toll would be wrong - financially, politically and as a matter of equity.



Jackson

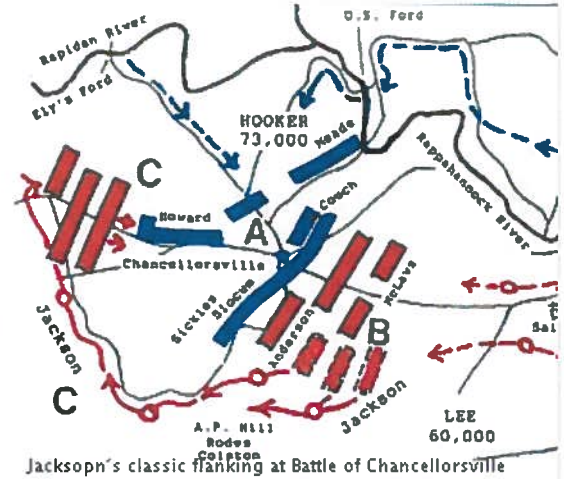
**NAMING:** Since George Washington's home and his estates at Mt Vernon are firmly located in Fairfax County an area further up the Potomac much closer in to Washington DC has a better claim to being named the George Washington Region. Mt Vernon is two counties removed from the Fredericksburg area.

This is the Stonewall Jackson Region. It is where the Confederate rebels' greatest general Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson fought his greatest battle, the Battle of Chancellorsville, and where he

died.

May 2 1863 Jackson with Lee's army of 43,000 men outfought a Union army of 73,000 with a bold flanking movement that is a classic in courses taught ever since in military academies around the world.

26,000 men, more than half of Lee's force were taken by Jackson on a 14 mile forced march from their positions to the east of the Union position, south and west so they could make a surprise flank attack from the west.



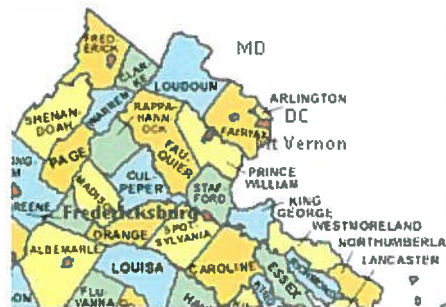
That evening just hours after his victory Jackson was seriously wounded in a friendly fire incident and had his left arm amputated by battlefield surgeons.

Confederate commander Robert E Lee famously said that Jackson lost his left arm "but I lost my right arm."

Jackson died of complications from his wounds and pneumonia a week later.

<http://www.nps.gov/frsp/chist.htm>

**MORE ON NAMING:** George Washington was born in 1732 on the family's farm in Westmoreland County.



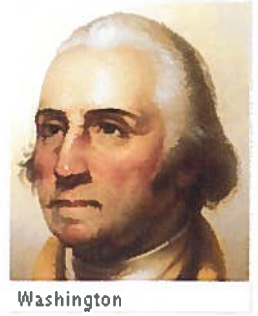
But at age six he moved to Ferry Farm in Stafford county and was educated and raised in the Fredericksburg area where he seems to have lived from age 6 into his 20s.

In his late teens he became a surveyor and worked surveying Baron Fairfax's lands in the Shenandoah Valley. His first public office was as surveyor of Culpeper County in 1749. But as a young man he regarded the counties around Fredericksburg as his home.

George's elder brother Lawrence died when George was only 19 and he took over Lawrence's Ferry Farm in Stafford Co just north of Frederickburg and became part of the local militia

becoming a Major at age 20.

His move north to Mt Vernon in Fairfax County came when he married Martha Custis at age 27 and gained title to the Mt Vernon estates in her family.



Bill Beck notes that George Washington called Fredericksburg "the place of my growing infancy." That could be taken many ways....

see earlier report on this tollroad when we called it the Rappahannock Parkway:

<http://www.tollroadsnews.com/node/150>

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