

FAMPO: Rappahannock River Crossing project is still best bet for new prioritization program

BY SCOTT SHENK | Posted: Tuesday, July 21, 2015 12:00 am

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It isn't official yet, but the Rappahannock River Crossing is still considered the best bet to alleviate congestion along the area's Interstate 95 corridor.

The Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Operations Board agreed on Monday night that the proposal, which includes collector-distributor roads along the interstate, scores the best as part of a new state prioritization program and will probably be the project it endorses.

Also on Monday, the FAMPO board signed off on funding for another key project, which is tied to the crossing proposal.

The board approved \$1.6 million in funding for preliminary work on improvements at the interchanges at either end of the crossing project—at U.S. 17 in Stafford and State Route 3 in Fredericksburg.

There is funding available for the estimated \$17.9 million project, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Preliminary designs show that the U.S. 17 interchange would be reconfigured, with flyovers and redesigned ramps replacing the current cloverleaf.

The reconstruction of the Route 3 interchange would include separating traffic headed into Central Park from traffic headed farther west on Route 3, according to preliminary designs.

Traffic exiting onto westbound Route 3 would have three lanes. A red-light signal would be installed at the end of the ramp, where traffic would make a slight right onto the highway.

That interchange work would be tied in with the Rappahannock River Crossing.

The river crossing is the top project in the region, according to FAMPO's long-range plan.

The Jackson Gateway, a proposal that would rework interchanges around the Massaponax area, was the second-highest-rated area project.

Extending the electronically tolled express lanes into Spotsylvania, and a project that would add a lane on I-95 in Stafford, were the next-highest-scoring projects.

The crossing project likely would be split into two phases, with the southbound lanes being built first. VDOT estimates that the southbound collector–distributor lanes would cost \$121 million and the northbound side around \$151 million.

To receive funding, the project must compete with other Virginia transportation projects in the state’s new prioritization program, recently approved by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

The state will start accepting project applications for the program later this year.

On Monday, the FAMPO board also agreed to consider adding other projects to be scored by the state, such as a commuter parking lot.

The FAMPO board said it would vote on the best projects to endorse at its September meeting.

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