

[Return to story](#)

New interchange in Spotsy backed

February 26, 2008 12:15 am

By KELLY HANNON
By KELLY HANNON

The Fredericksburg area is now seeking three new Interstate 95 interchanges.

One is a revamped, larger exit at Courthouse Road in Stafford. Another possible interchange would be built near the Virginia Welcome Center in Fredericksburg.

And last night, a new interchange between the Spotsylvania and Thornburg I-95 interchanges got the support of the region's transportation planning group, the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Board members passed a resolution supporting construction of a new interchange "in the vicinity of U.S. 17 in Spotsylvania."

But a question was posed --who will build an interchange first?

Two elected officials each from Stafford, Spotsylvania and Fredericksburg sit on FAMPO's board. When the resolution arose, there was a short discussion about whether one interchange has to be built or approved before another can start.

"Now we've asked for another interchange. How does this affect the region's requests?" said Stafford Supervisor Mark Dudenhefer, a FAMPO board member.

Interchange projects are funded by the Commonwealth Transportation Board, said David Ogle, district administrator for the Virginia Department of Transportation's Fredericksburg District.

So the Stafford interchange would not necessarily vie for funding with a Spotsylvania interchange. The Commonwealth Transportation Board would consider it with interstate projects around Virginia.

"That's a statewide competition," Ogle said.

FAMPO chair Matt Kelly, a Fredericksburg councilman, pointed out the Federal Highway Administration requires a new Courthouse Road interchange in Stafford. The interchange must be adjusted to accommodate the planned High Occupancy Toll lanes that will run through it.

Also, \$27 million has been set aside by the state Transportation Board to start the Courthouse Road interchange work, which could cost \$100 million to \$185 million, depending on the interchange design.

"It's going to be built," Kelly said.

There is no committed money at the moment to build the other two interchanges, although the interchange near the Virginia Welcome Center may link to a toll road that would serve as a bypass to State Route 3 in Spotsylvania.



A new interchange is proposed at the Virginia Welcome Center, to link with a proposed bypass toll road.

VDOT, the Celebrate Virginia Development Authority and the George Washington Regional Commission are splitting the cost of a federally required study of the Welcome Center interchange. The study is expected to finish in fall 2008.

The Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors passed a resolution several weeks ago supporting construction of an I-95 interchange between the Spotsylvania and Thornburg interchanges.

Hap Connors, a Spotsylvania supervisor and FAMPO board member, commended Stafford for lobbying to fund an interchange.

He said Spotsylvania seeks to do the same, so it is ready when funds are available.

"We're dying to get this on our priority list," Connors said.

The Spotsylvania interchange would be near the Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center, scheduled to open by the end of 2009.

The desire for new interchanges does not stop at the Spotsylvania county line.

"We're at the bottom of the heap," said Caroline Supervisor Jeff Sili. He pointed out improvements are needed at the I-95 exit at Carmel Church, which "produces a tremendous amount of state revenue," Sili said.

The Federal Highway Administration must approve all interchanges. It requires a completed Interchange Justification Report, which looks at how an interchange will affect traffic on the interstate long term.

Kelly Hannon: 540/374-5436

Email: khannon@freelancestar.com