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Rest area I-95 exit could ease Route 3

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By KELLY HANNON

Early traffic predictions for a State Route 3 bypass in Spotsylvania show 35,000 vehicles a day would use the road if the toll were \$1.

If the toll fell to 20 cents a trip, around 53,000 vehicles a day would use the road.

And if the road were free, connecting drivers from a new, partial Interstate 95 exit near the state rest area to Gordon Road, as many as 68,000 vehicles a day would drive on it, relieving congestion on Route 3.

Consulting firm Michael Baker Jr. developed the preliminary numbers for the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, which is overseeing a study on the potential interchange and toll road project.

FAMPO's board is a mix of Fredericksburg, Stafford and Spotsylvania administrative and elected officials.

During a meeting last night, officials were updated on the status of the study.

In the coming months, Michael Baker Jr. will identify a "preferred alternative" for the interstate and toll road, finalize cost estimates and toll feasibility, and prepare documents for the Virginia Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, according to Paul Prideaux,

assistant vice president at Michael Baker Jr.

The Federal Highway Administration must approve all changes to the interstate.

Prideaux shared several concepts for the interchange and toll road last night.

The interchange is described as partial because it would allow access west of I-95 only.

One alternative would be to locate the new interchange between Fall Hill Avenue and Cowan Boulevard. Another alternative would locate the interchange between the Rappahannock River Bridge and the rest area.

The interchange would be free and open to all vehicles, but vehicles may have to pay to continue driving

on a connected toll road that would bypass Route 3.

Three possible toll road routes were shown.

All of the concepts cross River Road, and continue along several different paths before terminating at Gordon Road.

Board members did not comment on the alternatives last night.

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