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## Should our area add toll road to ease congestion on Route 3?

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METERED parking is a hassle. Every two hours someone has to dash to the meter to feed it quarters. Even when you're away from your car--enjoying a meal, visiting friends--a small voice persists in your head:

Has it been two hours yet? Wait, how long did it take to walk here? Do I have any more quarters?

So I was impressed when the District Department of Transportation announced Friday that it will try a new payment method at 700 parking spaces in Washington, eliminating the need to use change or run back to the car. They will let customers pay for metered parking via their cell phones.

The service starts today for selected spaces near Dupont Circle, Union Station and the downtown area on K Street, I Street and New York Avenue N.W.

Drivers must first create a free account by calling 888/510-7275 or visiting [paybyphone.com](http://paybyphone.com). Drivers have to give their phone number, vehicle license plate number and credit card number.

Best of all, when time is winding down on your parking space, the account can send you a text message, asking if you want to extend your time.

Brilliant.

### SOUND OFF ON ROUTE 3

Do you have strong feelings about toll roads in Spotsylvania? Or driving in State Route 3 traffic?

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County are weighing whether to activate the George Washington Toll Road Authority, a regional group that would be empowered to set prices for any new toll roads constructed in the Route 3 corridor in the city and county.

A public hearing on the authority is scheduled for tomorrow during the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors meeting. The public hearings start at 6:30 p.m., but there are nine scheduled, and the toll road authority is ninth.

A second public hearing in Spotsylvania is scheduled for May 11.

If formed, the authority could build new highways only in the Route 3 corridor. It could enter into public-private partnerships. But it couldn't set toll rates above \$1 without getting the permission of the full City Council and the Spotsylvania board.

A similar public hearing in Fredericksburg last month drew one speaker.

Dear Kelly: This note is in regard to the section of River Road and Bragg Road at the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania line. I think we need a second opinion. There is something very much out of the ordinary. As the writer said before, it [the rough road] not only will jolt the fillings out of place, it will cause your bladder to empty.

--B.C. Bruce, Spotsylvania

Good news! In six weeks, the Virginia Department of Transportation will reach a point in the Bragg Road widening project where it can apply a new road surface in the work zone, and match up Bragg and River roads a little more evenly, said Tina Bundy, VDOT spokeswoman.

On making the turn between River and Bragg, VDOT acknowledged that the elevation between the roads is different, causing that jolt. In six weeks the jolting should stop.

Dear Kelly: If a school bus is stopped to pick up kids on one side of a divided highway--in this case, Spotsylvania Parkway--and you're driving in the opposite direction, do you have to stop? Thanks!

--Bob Wilson, Spotsylvania

This question is a great refresher after spring break. You don't have to stop for a school bus when it is stopped on the opposite side of a divided highway. The "divided" part is key.

Kelly Hannon is The Free Lance-Star's transportation reporter. If you have questions, send them to Getting There, c/o The Free Lance-Star, 616 Amelia St., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401, or visit [fredericksburg .com](http://fredericksburg.com).

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