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Facelift in planning stage for Lafayette Boulevard

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By KELLY HANNON

Lafayette Boulevard may not be the region's best welcome mat.

Visitors arriving in Fredericksburg from the south use the mostly two-lane road to reach the downtown area.

A regional transportation group, the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, is starting a \$300,000 yearlong study that will plan an overhaul of the gateway route, which is lined with houses, businesses and churches from U.S. 1 at Four-Mile Fork in Spotsylvania County to Sophia Street downtown.



A two-lane stretch of Lafayette Boulevard curves around the hill below the Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

FAMPO is working on a number of corridor studies, including U.S. 1 in North Stafford.

Lafayette Boulevard was identified by local governments as a priority, said Andy Waple, a FAMPO project manager.

"It's been seeing a fair amount of growth, and it's an older corridor that hasn't been updated in awhile," he said.

The public is invited to share ideas and comments at a workshop on improving Lafayette. It will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, June 26 at Spotswood Baptist Church on Lafayette Boulevard.

Unlike a hearing, where the public has to register to speak at a microphone, next week's workshop will be informal.

Maps and charts will be posted so the public can view them independently and ask the study team questions. Short presentations will be repeated throughout the night, Waple said, so the public can drop in any time between 6 and 9 p.m.

FAMPO staff will record concerns or suggestions related to safety on Lafayette Boulevard. The staff is also interested in comments about vehicles, transit, pedestrians and bicyclists.

FAMPO mailed 3,000 meeting notices to businesses and residents living near Lafayette Boulevard.

"As the historic southern gateway to Fredericksburg, this corridor has tremendous appeal and potential, and we want to know your thoughts on ways to enhance it," a FAMPO card says.

The workshop is open to all, and FAMPO encourages anyone planning to attend to register by Monday, June 23 by calling 800/627-2892.

An average of 20,634 vehicles a day travel Lafayette Boulevard between the city limits and U.S. 1, according to a 2007 traffic count by the Virginia Department of Transportation. A 1997 traffic count recorded an average 15,430 vehicles a day.

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WHAT: Public workshop on Lafayette Boulevard

WHEN: Thursday, June 26, 6 to 9 p.m. **WHERE:** Spotswood Baptist Church, 4009 Lafayette Blvd.

DETAILS: Can't make the meeting? Mail comments by July 28 to FAMPO, 406 Princess Anne St., Fredericksburg, Va. 22401 or e-mail suggestions to lafayettecomments@gwregion.org.

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