

[Return to story](#)

More lot spaces possible

March 30, 2010 12:36 am

By KELLY HANNON

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Stafford has chosen two parking-lot projects to compete for \$2.5 million in federal transportation funds in the Fredericksburg area.

Last week Stafford supervisors approved a \$400,000 request to start planning and design work for a new 850-space expansion of the existing Staffordboro Boulevard commuter lot, which fills every workday near Garrisonville Road.

Stafford is also seeking \$500,000 to finish design work on two parking expansions at Virginia Railway Express train stations in Stafford. When constructed, those expansions would add 234 spaces at Brooke and 200 spaces at Leeland Road.

But for now, the projects are just requests.

The projects have to compete with Fredericksburg's and Spotsylvania County's requested projects to get money.

In April, the Fredericksburg Area Metropolitan Planning Organization will apply an elaborate scoring process to determine which projects should receive part of the available \$2.5 million.

A vote will be taken in May by FAMPO's board.

"I expect we'll have \$10 [million] or \$12 million in requests," said Lloyd Robinson, FAMPO administrator, speaking at a board meeting last week.

The pool of federal money is from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, and goes to regions that need help meeting Environmental Protection Agency air quality standards. The money can be spent only on projects that improve air quality by reducing vehicle emissions.

Parking for commuters who carpool, vanpool, slug or ride the train qualifies.

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Federal grant money could be used to expand the Staffordboro Boulevard commuter lot, which is filled to capacity every work day.