

For Release May 3, 2006

Draft of April 27, 2006

**THE HALLOWED GROUND PARKWAY --
WILL LOUDOUN KILL THE PROJECT?**

By William Nicoson

The National Register of Historic Places offers a "Journey Through Hallowed Ground" using US Route 15 (with a few miles of VA Route 20) to connect Gettysburg, PA, with Charlottesville, VA, thus linking the historic Civil War battlefield with Monticello, the plantation of Thomas Jefferson. On the way, travelers may investigate other historic battlefields, such as Monocacy, MD, Antietam, MD, Harpers Ferry, WV, Boonsboro, MD, Bull Run at Manassas, VA, Cedar Mountain, VA, Chancellorsville, VA, Brandy Station, VA, and Bristoe Station, VA, and investigate other presidential domiciles at Gettysburg, PA (Dwight Eisenhower), and in Virginia: the current presidential retreat at Camp David, and residences of Zachary Taylor at Montebello, James Monroe at Oak Hill, James Madison at Montpelier and Herbert Hoover at Graves Mill.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has declared this 175-mile corridor to be an endangered historic site and has set about establishing a tristate conservation program to protect and enhance access to the historic battlegrounds and presidential residences in the corridor. It has named the project The Hallowed Ground Parkway. Senator George Allen (R-Va.) and Representative Frank R. Wolf (R-Va.) are seeking legislation which would designate the Parkway a "National Heritage Area."

Press reports have indicated that The Hallowed Ground Parkway has won the support of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. In Virginia, Fauquier and Prince William Counties and the towns of Leesburg and Warrenton have adopted resolutions approving the project.

State and local support is consistent with the objective of attracting tourism to localities on or near the proposed Parkway by promising access to historic sites drawing national and global interest. It is undisputed that the tourism draw of major sites benefits sites nearby. Tourists from abroad may have come primarily to visit Monticello, but, traveling north on the Hallowed Ground Parkway, they will discover Loudoun County's Oatlands Plantation and may venture to explore the celebrated new town nearby named Reston with its magnificent Lake Anne Village Center and its vibrant Town Center.

Nevertheless, unlike Leesburg, Loudoun County's Board of Supervisors last February declined to endorse the Hallowed Ground project. Supervisors expressed concern that their authority over property development in Loudoun's 22 miles of the corridor would be restricted or compromised.

Those of us who expect that the Hallowed Ground Parkway will bring considerable financial benefits to both Northern and Southern Virginia await recognition by Loudoun County Supervisors that their opposition disserves their constituents as well as their neighbors.

William Nicoson, a long-time resident of Reston and member of the DC Bar, has advised extensively on sponsorship of tourism.