

From Jay Hancock's blog:

A big talking point of opponents of slots at Arundel Mills is: Let's put slots at Laurel Park

raceway instead of Arundel Mills. Then Anne Arundel County can still get the slots revenue and the casino will be where gambling already happens. Mall-slots opponents want, as the ads say, "to put slots in a better location in Anne Arundel County, Laurel Park."

After all, [Laurel](#) Park is within two miles of Maryland Route 295, where slots are allowed under state law. Right? Everybody expected slots to go to Laurel Park, anyway, before the owners stumbled and left the way open for [the Cordish Cos.](#) to make a proposal for the mall.

The Constitutional amendment permitting Maryland slots in certain locations specifies one of the locations as: "(I) ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, WITHIN 2 MILES OF MD ROUTE 295;"

But activists who live in the Russett neighborhood, near Laurel Park, say that the racetrack is not within two miles of Route 295. Slots at the track aren't allowed under the Constitution, they say.

They may have a case. True, the race course is within two miles of the Baltimore- Washington Parkway, also known as 295. But the portion of the road near Laurel is under federal, not state control, so you could argue that it's not really "MD Route 295." According to the Maryland State Highway Administration, the state owns and maintains the road from the Baltimore City line in the north to just past the intersection with Maryland Route 175 in the south. (That's more than 4 miles from Laurel Park, according to [Google](#) Earth.) After that, says SHA spokesman Charles Gischlar, "the federal government picks it up."

What's more, below 175 and extending through Anne Arundel County, there are no signs on the road designating it as "295," Gischlar says.

What's the road called as it passes Laurel?, I asked National Park Service spokesman Jeffrey Olson. "As far as I know we call it the Baltimore-Washington Parkway," he said.

"I completely understand that I'm splitting hairs here," says Joe Franco, who's on the board of the Russett homeowner association and is trying to draw attention to the federal status of the parkway near Laurel Park.

Maybe, but it looks like the law could

have been made a lot clearer. Maybe opponents of Laurel Park slots have ground to argue before a judge that a federal parkway isn't "Maryland" route anything. If Cordish wins next week, the argument will be irrelevant. But if he loses, this could be another way in which Arundel slots get delayed in the courts.

Here is Wikipedia's definition of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, which it says bears the "hidden" designation of Maryland 295.

"The road begins at an interchange with U.S. Route 50 and Maryland Route 201 near Cheverly in [Prince George's County](#) at the D.C. border, and continues northeast as a parkway maintained by the National Park Service (NPS) to Maryland Route 175 near [Fort Meade](#), serving many federal institutions. This portion of the parkway is dedicated to Gladys Noon Spellman, a representative of Maryland's 5th congressional district, and has the hidden Maryland Route 295 designation. Commercial vehicles, including trucks, are prohibited within this stretch. After leaving park service boundaries the highway is maintained by the state and signed with the MD 295 designation."

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