News and Updates

This edition of the Route 29 Solutions e-mail newsletter includes everything you need to know about the status of the Route 29 Solutions projects: Rio Grade-Separated Intersection, Route 29 Widening, Berkmar Drive Extension and Hillsdale Drive Extension.

The pedestrian crosswalks at the Rio Road intersection now have a stamped brick pattern to make them more visible; a similar pattern is stamped into the business entrances within the intersection area. Nighttime work still ongoing includes staining the concrete walls and bridge parapets. Some of the stained wall is visible in the background.

**Finishing Touches Are Applied to Rio Intersection Project**

Final work continues on the Rio Road grade-separated intersection project. Among the activities still to be completed are sealing and staining the retaining walls so the surface more closely resembles dry-stacked stone and completing the application of a brick-colored material to delineate the pedestrian crosswalks.
During the past several weeks adjustments have been made to the pedestrian signals at the intersection so they function more efficiently for pedestrian traffic. Pavement markings are being completed, including the application of route shields on the intersection approaches to help drivers navigate the proper lanes depending on whether they are traveling through on Route 29 or have a local destination.

VDOT and Lane-Corman traffic engineers are also continuing to monitor and analyze traffic at the intersection as well as along the corridor to adjust the traffic signals for the most efficient movement of traffic both on Route 29 and on the side streets.

Berkmar Bridge Girders in Place

The South Fork Rivanna River has a new bridge in place. The steel girders that will support the deck of the bridge that will carry Berkmar Drive Extended over the river are set and work continues to prepare the formwork so the concrete bridge deck and parapet walls can be poured later this fall.

Meanwhile, most of the roadway alignment is at rough grade and drainage structures are being delivered and set into place. The storm water management basins are nearing completion, as are the culverts that carry several streams underneath the road.

With the girders in place, crews are working on the abutments at each end and installing the deck pans that will provide support while the concrete deck is poured later this fall. In the background the roadway is nearing its final grade.

The Route 29 Solutions improvement projects represent a significant investment to improve mobility and reduce congestion on the busiest north-south corridor in the Charlottesville / Albemarle County region.

GET THE FACTS

Don’t rely on hearsay. Learn the facts of the Route 29 Solutions package from the professionals who are leading the project. We know there are many questions, so we’ve answered the most common ones we’re hearing in an updated Frequently Asked Questions page on the Route29Solutions.org website under the heading FAQs.

Please share this newsletter. Visit Route29Solutions.org to be added to the enews list.
Upcoming activities include grading for the roundabout at Hilton Heights Road and additional drainage work at the bridge abutments north and south of the river.

Drainage structures are being installed along the outer edge of the reconstructed southbound lanes at North Hollymead Drive. Once the structures are in place, concrete curbs will be placed along the pavement edge to direct water into the drainage system.

The southbound lanes are being paved in preparation for the traffic switch during the evening of Nov. 4.

**Two Traffic Shifts Upcoming on Route 29 Widening Project**

In the next few weeks drivers on Route 29 will see two traffic switches on the Route 29 Widening project between Polo Grounds Road and Hollymead Town Center.

Beginning the evening of Friday, Nov. 4, southbound traffic will move to the west onto the permanent
pavement now under construction. That switch will allow the lanes currently carrying southbound traffic to be prepared for northbound traffic. Traffic will be moved to the new lanes by early Saturday, Nov. 5.

In late November northbound traffic will shift from the existing northbound lanes to the pavement now carrying southbound traffic. Moving vehicles off the existing northbound lanes is necessary so those lanes can be reconstructed to eliminate the current sight distance issues around Ashwood Boulevard and several other locations. The outer segment of the current northbound lanes will be rebuilt as a 10-foot-wide, paved multi-use path parallel to the roadway.

If you’re curious about how the road will look when it’s complete, the lanes now carrying northbound traffic and the rebuilt southbound lanes are at the final roadway grade. The northbound lanes will be reconstructed to a similar grade and elevation.

Look for more details about the timing of the northbound traffic shift in coming weeks on the project web site, Route29Solutions.org/news_updates and on Twitter, @Rt29Solutions.

Steel piles that will support the bridge on Hillsdale Drive Extended are being driven into the ground between the Post Office and the Pepsi-Cola property.

**Hillsdale Extension Progressing**

Construction is in full swing to extend Hillsdale Drive from Greenbrier Drive to Hydraulic Road. Demolition of a building in the path of the new road has wrapped up
and utility relocation is almost complete, allowing the contractor to focus on road construction.

Work under way includes building a retaining wall at Pepsi, pile driving for the bridge abutments, and storm water controls at Seminole Square and just north of Greenbrier.

The speed limit on Hillsdale Drive south of Branchlands Boulevard has been reduced to 25 mph. This is a permanent change. A new three-way stop has been implemented at the intersection of India Road and Line Drive to aid construction equipment entering the roadway from the construction yard.

The City of Charlottesville is managing the project with VDOT assistance. The road is scheduled for completion Oct. 30, 2017, the same date as the remaining Route 29 Solutions projects.

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**Extras**

**Route 29 Signal Timing Adjustments**

“Green band” is a term often used by traffic engineers. It refers to timing traffic signals so that drivers encounter consecutive green lights on a corridor in order to keep traffic flowing efficiently.

Since the re-opening of the Route 29/Rio Road intersection in late July, VDOT and Lane-Corman have been analyzing traffic movements along Route 29 and making multiple signal timing adjustments to improve traffic flow and safety. Adjustments have been made to reduce the number of red lights motorists encounter driving Route 29, clear left turn lanes within a signal cycle and discourage red light running.

Tweaks to signals continue to be made as traffic volumes return to normal levels following the summertime intersection restrictions. Once road construction is complete in the fall of 2017, the second phase of adaptive traffic signal technology will be installed, which will automatically adjust signal timing based on real time traffic levels.

**Business Assistance Campaign**
Business assistance activities to promote businesses near the Rio Road grade-separated intersection project proved popular and successful. Branded “Rio+29 Worth the Drive,” the campaign included advertising, a website and marketing help. It was funded by the Commonwealth ($200,000) and Albemarle County ($100,000).

Through the end of July 2016, a week after the intersection restrictions were lifted, the campaign had produced close to 10 million impressions, which are opportunities to be seen: 4.3 million were radio, TV and newspaper and 5.5 million were digital. The [Rio+29 website](http://www.riotw.org) had just under 5,000 total visits, with 590 “get-around” maps downloaded.

In addition, 21 businesses participated in the county’s matching program for advertising assistance and 40 business owners took classes from the county or used marketing assistance from the county’s small business center.

The program is administered by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission and wrapped up earlier this month.

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**Get Connected**

**Hotlines: We’re here for you**

- Lane-Corman Joint Venture, the contractor for the three Route 29 Solutions design-build projects, has a toll-free telephone number, 844-220-5540. Calls with questions or comments about the Route 29 widening, Rio Road grade-separated intersection and Berkmar Drive extension projects will be returned within one business day.

- Those with questions about other Route 29 Solutions projects should call 434-529-6314 or email [Route29Solutions@VDOT.Virginia.gov](mailto:Route29Solutions@VDOT.Virginia.gov).

- All other VDOT-related questions or comments should be directed to 800-367-7623 (800-FOR-ROAD). VDOT’s Customer Service Center is staffed 24/7/365 and the contact will be directed to the appropriate field staff.
Keep up with Route 29 news

Traffic alerts for the Route 29 Solutions projects are available on the project website under News & Traffic Alerts. Sign up for alerts to be delivered to your e-mail on the Project Newsletter page.