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.

Sunset over Charlottesville, looking south from the deck of the Rio Road bridge over Route 29.

**Rio Road Grade-Separated Intersection Finished on Time**

The [Rio Road grade-separated intersection](http://www.rio-road-grade-separated-intersection.com) project was completed Dec. 2, on time and within the project’s $69.7 million budget. “Completion of the Rio Road grade-separated intersection project represents a major milestone in the improvement of the Route 29 corridor in the Charlottesville region,” said Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne. “It is also an example of how transparency and community involvement in the project development and delivery process adds value.”

The project, which transformed one of the most congested intersections on the Route 29 corridor by...
grade-separating through traffic from traffic with a destination on or near Rio Road, took 21 months from the notice to proceed to the contractor to final completion.

Lane-Corman Joint Venture, the contractor responsible for designing and building the Route 29-Rio Road GSI as well as widening Route 29 and extending Berkmar Drive (see separate stories below), began relocating overhead and underground utilities while they completed final design work.

Construction of the grade-separated intersection began in August 2015. Most of the work was done at night, with major lane closures between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. That work continued through the winter with minimal disruptions due to winter weather events.

On May 23 the Rio Road crossover was closed for a planned 103-day period when the bridge across Route 29 was to be built and the retaining walls and through lanes constructed. Working around the clock, six days a week, crews with Lane-Corman completed the bridge and through lane construction in 57 days. The intersection was reopened to traffic on July 18, 46 days ahead of schedule.

“The partnership between VDOT and Lane-Corman, as well as the cooperation of Albemarle County, the nearby businesses and neighborhoods and the community at large, were instrumental in the success of this project,” said VDOT Commissioner Charles Kilpatrick. “Without the involvement of the businesses and the community – and their understanding for the inconveniences they experienced – we would not have attained this successful outcome.”

**Berkmar Bridge Deck Completed**

Crews building the Berkmar Drive bridge have a target to complete several tasks before cold and winter weather force a halt to some activities. One significant milestone was reached Dec. 10 when concrete for the final section of the bridge deck was poured.

The deck of the 716-foot long bridge required five
separate pours totaling 1,000 cubic yards of concrete. (That's enough concrete to cover a football field to a depth of six inches.) Once the deck has cured the crews will return to pour the parapet walls and the barrier that will separate vehicle traffic from the shared-use path on the bridge.

Along the road's alignment much of the concrete curbing is in place and the base layer of gravel is being spread and compacted to create the foundation for the asphalt roadway.

South of the Rivanna River crossing earthwork has also begun for the roundabout at Hilton Heights Road. That roundabout will replace the current “T” intersection at Hilton Heights and Berkmar Drive and provide a connection to the Berkmar Drive extension.

The concrete deck on the Berkmar Drive bridge was completed Dec. 10. Five separate operations were required to place the 1,000 cubic yards of concrete onto the 716-foot-long bridge. The boom rising above the bridge is used to pump the concrete from the staging area below the bridge onto the deck. The yellow gantry frames on the bridge are the machines that spread and smooth the concrete.

**Route 29 Widening Construction Moves to Northbound Lanes**

The [Route 29 Widening](https://example.com) project between Route 643 (Polo Grounds Road) and Hollymead Town Center is also progressing rapidly and several months ahead of schedule. After switching northbound traffic onto the
new pavement in the former median area in mid-November, the contractor is grading the original northbound lanes to create a third lane for northbound traffic as well as a 10-foot-wide paved path.

That multi-use path will run just to the east of and parallel to the highway from Polo Grounds Road to North Hollymead Drive. From there a pedestrian crosswalk will guide users to a sidewalk on the west side of the road, where they can continue a short distance north to Hollymead Town Center.

The reconstruction of the northbound lanes, which also includes drainage and installation of a new waterline along the right of way, is the last phase of the project that involves major construction and a traffic shift. The current traffic patterns will remain in place through the end of the year but there will be additional work that will affect traffic in January. Information about that work will be posted on the project web site Route29Solutions.org/news_updates and on Twitter, @Rt29Solutions.

After the traffic switch last month, excavation is under way on the original northbound lanes to install an underground utility and address sight distance issues. The work also includes grading the location of a multi-use path to the east of the northbound lanes.

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**Major Construction Progresses Along Length of Hillsdale Project**

The [extension of Hillsdale Drive](#) within the Charlottesville city limits, which is also a project in the
Route 29 Solutions package, is also well under construction.

According to the city’s most recent construction update: “A new section of roadway will be opened after New Year’s between existing Hillsdale Drive (off of Hydraulic Road) to India Road. Once this section of roadway is opened, construction will begin a roundabout at Zan Road and Line Drive. Access will be interrupted between Zan Road and Line Drive. Access from Route 29 North to India Road and to Zan Road will be unchanged. Detour signage and a detour map are being drafted to direct drivers from Route 29 South to use the new Hillsdale Drive to access 18 businesses. The detour will last approximately two months.”

On the north end of the project the realignment of Hillsdale Drive at Greenbrier Drive is progressing, as well as construction of a bridge over the creek just south of the U.S. Post Office property.

Monthly project construction updates are available on the City of Charlottesville’s [Hillsdale Drive project web site](#), where you can also sign up to receive the updates via email. The road is scheduled for completion Oct. 30, 2017, the same date as the remaining Route 29 Solutions projects.

The northern bridge abutment on the Hillsdale Drive extension, between the post office and the Pepsi-Cola property, is complete. In the foreground workers are building the forms for the abutment on the south side of the creek, behind Seminole Square Shopping Center.
Extras

Berkmar Bridge Time-Lapse Construction Camera Records Project's Progress

Don’t forget to check out our progress building the Berkmar Drive extension and bridge. A time-lapse camera is capturing images as construction progresses. You can view past and current photos or a time-lapse video of work in progress. The images are posted on the project website homepage as well as on the Berkmar Extension project page.

Home for the Holidays? Drive with Care

Please remind your holiday visitors that construction is underway on Route 29 from Polo Grounds Road to Towncenter Drive. Drivers should use extra caution as lane configurations have changed. Drivers should also be aware of reduced work zone speed limits, narrowed lanes and construction barrels. There will be no lane closures during the holiday period.

Advisory Panel Schedule Changes

The Route 29 Solutions Project Delivery Advisory Panel will meet monthly in 2017. The meetings will be on the third Thursday of the month at 2 p.m. at the Virginia Transportation Research Council at the University of Virginia, 530 Edgemont Road. The first quarter meetings have been scheduled for January 19, February 16 and March 16. Meetings are open to the public, streamed live and are available on video at route29solutions.org.

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.

• 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.