Rio Intersection Traffic Restrictions Begin Monday

This special edition of the Route 29 Solutions e-mail newsletter includes everything you need to know about the May 23 through September 2 restricted period at Route 29 and Rio Road for the grade-separated intersection construction.

Major construction at Rio Road begins May 23

Access to all businesses remains open

We’re counting down the days to the major construction on the Rio Road grade-separated intersection project. Beginning Monday May 23 traffic movements at the intersection will be limited while the contractor builds a bridge to carry Rio Road traffic across Route 29. All traffic movements at the intersection will be restored no later than Sept. 2.

During the 103 days, two lanes of southbound traffic and three lanes of northbound traffic will be maintained on Route 29 between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. Traffic on Rio Road will not be able to cross Route 29, but Rio Road will remain open on both sides of the intersection and all right turns will be maintained — from Rio Road onto Route 29 and from Route 29 onto Rio Road.

In preparation for the new traffic pattern at the busy intersection, VDOT and Albemarle County are conducting major public education and outreach efforts. VDOT’s “get around map” and Albemarle County’s “Rio+29: Worth the Drive” business assistance campaign are receiving wide

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ABOUT ROUTE 29 SOLUTIONS

The Route 29 Solutions improvement projects represent a significant investment in mobility and
distribution and notice among the businesses along the corridor, residents and others who use Route 29.

Since late last summer the contractor, Lane-Corman Joint Venture, completed significant construction work each night at the intersection in preparation for this major milestone. Between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. the intersection has been a beehive of activity with as many as eight to 10 crews installing bridge pilings, storm drainage systems, retaining walls and new sidewalks and curbing. Each morning steel plates are placed and the lanes reopened to traffic in time for the morning commuters.

Once the Rio Road crossover is closed the contractor will work around the clock in the median area to remove 60,000 cubic yards of dirt while simultaneously setting 47 concrete beams for the bridge deck. As the earth is removed supportive beams called lagging will be placed, followed by concrete facing for the retaining walls north and south of the intersection.

Internal preparations are also proceeding at a furious pace. The VDOT project team and the contractor’s key personnel meet several times a week to review the work plan so the entire group is familiar with how construction will unfold and to anticipate possible challenges. “With so much intensive work going on in a relatively small area, detailed planning and coordination are critical to the safe and efficient execution of this phase of construction,” said Dave Covington, the Route 29 Solutions program manager.

Come May 23, the plans will be put into action and the grade separation of the Rio Road intersection will begin in earnest.
One of the 47 beams for the Rio Road bridge travels down Route 29 to the staging area on the Route 29 Widening project.

Stay Informed

- **Homepage Facelift**
  The project website route29solutions.org has been redesigned to include real-time traffic information on the homepage so motorists can plan traffic based on current traffic. The featured map pulls live traffic, incident and planned event data from 511Virginia.org. Images from live traffic cameras in the Charlottesville area are also available by clicking camera icons on the map.

- **Time lapse cameras**
  Two time-lapse cameras capturing images of the Rio GSI as construction progresses are posted on the homepage of the project website as well as on project pages. Check out the Rio Road GSI cameras, located north and south of the intersection to view past and current photos or a time-lapse video of work in progress.

- **Get your "get around map"**
  Detailed maps showing allowed traffic movements and providing detour routes for each of the four quadrants of the Rio intersection have been widely distributed to businesses in the area to hand out to customers. In addition, the maps are available on the project website for download. Also on the website is a map depicting alternate routes. Find them here under “Navigation Aids.” For additional maps please contact Lou Hatter, project communications manager, at 434-529-6314, or by email, Lou.Hatter@VDOT.Virginia.gov.
VDOT and county launch advertising campaigns

VDOT and Albemarle County are conducting complementary public education and outreach campaigns during the summer construction at the Rio Road grade-separated intersection project. The county’s program, called “Rio+29 Worth the Drive,” encourages residents and those using Route 29 to continue to shop and patronize businesses along the corridor and especially within the Rio Road intersection project area. Ads featuring some of those local businesses are running on radio, TV, in print and online.

The VDOT advertising is designed to help motorists navigate the construction at Rio Road, particularly during the summer when the intersection crossover is closed and left turns are not permitted. VDOT’s public education ad campaign is currently running on TV, radio, in print and online in the Charlottesville region as well as in other markets along the Route 29 corridor.

Route 29/250 Interchange nears completion; all lanes open Saturday
Overhead signs are installed and the new southbound lane is open on Emmet Street south of Hydraulic Road. Final work is being completed on the Route 250 Bypass.

The Route 29/250 Interchange project, known locally as the Best Buy ramp, will open to traffic by Saturday, May 21, before the restricted period begins at the Route 29/Rio Road intersection.

While all lanes will be open for traffic, minor elements of the project may not be finished. Some work on the maintenance access road, pedestrian signals and grading and seeding of slopes could continue. Staining the sound walls will occur this fall. It’s unlikely they would require lane closures, but if they do they would occur at night.

The project provides an additional lane on the ramp from Route 29 south onto the Route 250 Bypass and an associated merge lane on Route 250 westbound to the Barracks Road exit. It also includes: An additional southbound lane to Route 29 by widening in the median from just south of Hydraulic Road to the Route 250 Bypass interchange; a new sidewalk between Morton Drive and Angus Road in the U.S. 29 median; and sound walls on the Route 250 Bypass between Route 29 and Barracks Road.

**Hillsdale Drive Extension moves forward**

The Hillsdale Drive Extension, from Greenbrier Drive to
Hydraulic Road, was advertised for construction on March 31. The one-mile extension will offer an alternative to Route 29 for local traffic that completes a parallel road network to Route 29.

A pre-bid conference was held April 12 with about a dozen contractors or suppliers in attendance. Bids are due May 23. Construction is expected to begin on June 30 and end October 30, 2017.

The extension provides a new three-lane road and bridge with bike lanes north of Greenbrier Drive and a shared use path south of Greenbrier Drive. The City of Charlottesville and VDOT are teaming up to keep this project on schedule. The city is managing engineering and construction, while VDOT is picking up the responsibility for acquiring all of the right-of-way.

Project Updates

Berkmar Drive Extension

- Low-level blasting at the north end of the project has begun. The blasting will loosen rock that must be removed to allow excavation to the final roadway grade. It will be followed by low-level blasting at the south end.

- Construction activities include: Form, pour and backfill bridge abutments, strip topsoil, erosion control and seeding, drilling of pier shafts, set MSE panels.

- Travel impacts: Intermittent flagging along Rio Mills Road during equipment movements.

Route 29 Widening

- Delivery of Rio Road bridge beams for staging began this week.

- Wire wall construction in preparation for traffic shifts.

- Construction activities also include: jack and bore drainage pipes underneath Route 29, stripping and hauling topsoil, cut and fill in median, box culverts, gas main relocations.
Nighttime travel impacts: Left lane closures both northbound and southbound.

This boring machine is installing a new 72-inch culvert that will carry a stream underneath Route 29. The conveyor belt moves soil from the cutting head to the back of the machine; just under the conveyer is the seat where the operator works.

**Rio Road/Route 29 Intersection**

- Work at intersection has ramped down in preparation for May 23.

- Southbound Route 29 traffic shifted to widened pavement on May 8.

- Recent construction activities include: Curb and gutter,
raised islands, median strip demolition, fire department connections, form and beam seat preparations, signal and cabinet foundations, temporary barrier wall.

- Travel impacts: Rio crossover closed to through movements and left turns beginning 8 p.m. May 22. See the first news article for details.

**Route 29/250 Bypass Interchange**

- Recent construction activities include: Completion of the sound walls and barrier walls, installation of overhead and ground sign structures, and milling, paving and striping.

- Completion: May 21. See the second news article for details.

**Traffic Signal Improvements**

- Signals at 15 intersections have been upgraded with communications and cameras within the project budget to enable VDOT to better manage traffic during the Rio intersection closure.

**Hillsdale Extended**

- Utility relocation and right of way acquisition are underway.

- Advertised for construction March 31. Bid deadline extended one week to May 23. See third news article for details.

- 100 percent roadway design plans are posted on the Hillsdale Drive Extended [project page](#) on the Route 29 Solutions website.

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**Things You Should Know**

**More time lapse images of construction**

A time-lapse camera is also capturing images of Berkmar Drive construction. Check it out on the [Berkmar Extension](#) project.
Website homepage has a new look

In addition to live traffic information, the new homepage route29solutions.org features a photo of the week and links to the time lapse cameras at the Rio intersection and at Berkmar Extended.

Read project documents

Important new project documents are posted on the project website: 100 percent roadway plans for Hillsdale Drive Extension

On time. On budget.

All the Route 29 Solutions projects remain on schedule and on budget. Below are some important dates:

- May 21, 2016: Route 29 / Route 250 Interchange construction complete
- May 23, 2016: Rio Road intersection restrictions begin
- September 2, 2016: Rio Road intersection reopens to all traffic movements
- December 2, 2016: Rio Road project construction complete
- October 30, 2017: All project construction complete

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.

Don’t get delayed

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