Keeping you informed is critical to a successful project. So in addition to public panel meetings, live streaming, podcasts and an interactive website, we’re providing this e-mail newsletter to expand our communications with the users of the Route 29 corridor. Here you’ll find the latest news, project updates and helpful facts.

Traffic Patterns Changing on Rt. 29 Near Rio Road

Motorists using Route 29 will see several significant changes to the traffic patterns around the Rio Road intersection in early September. On Sept. 9 the intersections at Albemarle Square and the north entrance to Fashion Square Mall will close and the traffic signals will be removed. This is necessary to make room for roadway construction, which will begin shortly after. Both shopping center entrances will remain open for right-in, right-out movements.

At the same time the existing signals are removed temporary signals will be placed into service at Berkmar Drive and in the vicinity of Myers Drive. The median at Berkmar Drive will be removed to allow full movements, including left turns, from Route 29 onto Berkmar Drive and from Berkmar onto Route 29 north. The signal and median break near Myers Drive will allow northbound traffic only to make u-turns and return south toward Rio Road.
VDOT has begun an extensive multi-media public outreach and advertising campaign to inform all who use Route 29 of the changes to the traffic patterns and access to the shopping centers. A new page on the project website explains the changes and how to navigate the area after the crossovers and signals are removed Sept. 9.

**State Bolsters Business Assistance Program**

The state is kicking in $200,000 to expand Albemarle County’s $100,000 collective marketing campaign within its Business Assistance Program for the Rio Road grade-separated intersection. Transportation Secretary Aubrey Layne announced the contribution at the July 16 Project Delivery Advisory Panel meeting.

Other elements of the county’s Business Assistance Program include a matching grant program, marketing and communications workshops, and one-on-one consulting and mentoring opportunities for businesses most impacted by construction.

The $200,000 in state funds will be targeted to the collective marketing campaign and will be managed by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission and its Route 29 business assistance subcommittee.
Links to Albemarle County's Route 29 Solutions business assistance program are posted on the Route 29 website at Documents & Archives.

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**Route 29 Widening Under Way**

Work has begun to widen Route 29 from four lanes to six lanes between Polo Grounds Road and Towncenter Drive. It’s the second of the three design-build projects to commence construction.

Crews are installing a barrier wall where the first phase of work will take place. Other construction activities include survey work, temporary lane striping, pavement milling and clearing and grading in the median. Nighttime lane closures will occur periodically throughout construction. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained in both directions during daytime hours. All existing access points will also be maintained.

Beyond construction, right-of-way appraisals are being developed and offers are being made to landowners.

The widening project includes a paved multi-use path on the east side of Route 29 from the southern end of the project to Hollymead Drive as well as reconstruction of some sections of the existing highway to eliminate sight-distance deficiencies and improve overall safety.
 Barrier wall is being installed along the median and northbound lanes north of Polo Grounds Road. Motorists should move to the right in advance of the lane reduction.

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**Project Updates**

**Berkmar Drive Extension**

- Progressing within the design-build project delivery process. Roadway construction begins in the late fall of 2015.

- Geotechnical and acoustic monitoring reports complete.

- Real estate appraisals have begun and property owners will be contacted regarding acquisition of right of way and easements.

- 60 percent design plans and cross sections are posted on the Route 29 website at [Berkmar Drive Extension page](#).

**Route 29 Widening**

- Progressing within the design-build project
delivery process. Utility relocations started earlier this summer and will be followed by roadway construction.

- Median clearing and installation of barrier wall has begun and right of way negotiations are under way. See the third news article in this newsletter for details.

**Rio Road/Route 29 Intersection**

- Progressing within the design-build project delivery process.

- 100 percent roadway and bridge design plans have been submitted and are available at Route 29 website on the [Rio Road Intersection page](#).

- Utility relocations are in full swing in all quadrants, including work on a major water main that will involve trenching across the travel and turn lanes. Steel plates will be installed when work is suspended. Those plates are anchored in place and covered with a skid-resistant surface but motorists should drive carefully through those areas.

- Right of way negotiations ongoing.

- Look for new traffic pattern changes. See the first news article in this newsletter for details.

**Route 29/250 Bypass Interchange**
Excavation and construction have started on the retaining wall that will support the additional lane and sound wall on the Route 250 Bypass.

- Construction is progressing.
- Work continues to widen the median on Route 29 for an extra travel lane.
- Work continues on construction of retaining wall at Best Buy.
- Work continues on Route 250 retaining wall and drainage structures along Barracks Road exit ramp.
- Additional signs and pavement markings were installed to alert drivers to the yield condition on the Best Buy ramp.

**Adaptive Signals**

- Punch list for Phase 1 is complete.
- Reconstruction of the traffic signals at Woodbrook Drive and Berkmar Drive continues. The new signal will include a “protected” left-turn phase for motorists turning left from Berkmar onto Woodbrook. That movement now conflicts with traffic continuing straight on Berkmar Drive.
Hillsdale Drive Extended

- This project is being administered by the city of Charlottesville.
- Work includes finalizing environmental reevaluation document, continuing appraisal process on select parcels and noise study update.
- Additional study continues to determine whether a traffic signal at Hillsdale and Greenbrier is warranted.

Things You Should Know

Point Me in the Right Direction
More than 30 businesses within the Rio GSI project have been identified as qualifying for the Tourist Oriented Directional Signs program. Applications have been distributed to the qualifying business. Application, installation and annual fees for the business wayfinding signs are waived until Aug. 31, 2017. Businesses may contact Lou Hatter (phone 434-529-6314; email Lou.Hatter@VDOT.Virginia.gov) for additional information about participating in the TODS program.

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs are already displayed by several businesses along Route 29 near Rio Road.

Route 29/Rio Road Intersection
Placenames
As a result of focus groups attended by about 100 business representatives, several conclusions were reached including: use the name Rio in any final naming consideration; focus future naming conversations on Rio Crossings, Rio Crossroads and Rio Square; and explore naming intersection corners using both geographic (NE, SE, SW and NW) and locational references. Work continues with business representatives to develop final recommendations that will be presented in September.

Hotlines: We're Here For You
Lane-Corman Joint Venture, the contractor for the three Route 29 Solutions design-build projects, now 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).

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.

Read Project Documents
Important new project documents are posted on the project website:

- Rio Road/Route 29 GSI 100 percent roadway and bridge design plans have been submitted and are available on the Rio Road Intersection page.

- Berkmar Extension 60 percent design plans and cross sections are posted on the Berkmar Drive
Links to Albemarle County's Route 29 Solutions business assistance program are posted at Documents & Archives

**On Time, On Budget**

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

- **Mid-May**: Utility relocations begin at Route 29 and Rio Road
- **July 2015**: Utility relocation begins on Route 29 widening between Polo Grounds Road and Towncenter Drive
- **Sept. 9, 2015**: Crossovers and signals at Albemarle Square Court and Fashion Square Drive (north) are removed and temporary crossovers and signals at Berkmar Drive and the vicinity of Myers Drive are placed in service.
- **September 2015**: Construction begins on Rio Road grade-separated intersection and Route 29 widening projects.
- **October 2015**: Utility relocations begin on Berkmar Drive Extended project
- **Late fall 2015**: Construction begins on Berkmar Drive Extended project
- **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