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.

**Architectural and landscape treatments enhance Rio GSI**

Stamped brick and cobblestone patterns, landscape planters, expanded pedestrian lighting and decorative place naming on the bridge facade are among the enhanced aesthetic treatments developed by the Southern Environmental Law Center and recommended by the Project Delivery Advisory Panel.

The landscape and architectural treatments that will be incorporated into the Rio Grade Separated Intersection include:

- Terra cotta colored, stamped concrete or asphalt in a brick pattern on pedestrian crosswalks and business entrances to unify the pedestrian walkway.
- Carrying the stamped pattern through to the bridge deck, as well as gray stamped concrete in a cobblestone pattern on the ends of the bridge.
- Variable size planters for landscape material including liriope, daffodils, knockout roses, switch or muhly grass on the bridge deck.

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ABOUT ROUTE 29 SOLUTIONS

The Route 29 Solutions improvement projects represent a significant
Dark gray colored concrete curbs and borders.
Replicating the color scheme of the stained concrete surfaces from the McIntire interchange bridge on the Rio and Berkmar bridges.
Align pedestrian lighting on the local lanes and extend the pedestrian lighting to the north and south limits of the project on Route 29.
Add a decorative treatment of the location name “Rio” to the facade of the bridge above the north and southbound lanes.

Construction at Rio begins new phase

Nighttime work to install anchors for the pilings that will support the bridge and retaining walls at the Rio Road grade-separated intersection began in late January. The work, which is done at night, uses a compressed air-driven auger to drill the tie-back anchors into the soil behind the piles.
During nighttime work on Route 29 a crew installs a piling that will support the retaining wall along the local lanes north of Rio Road.

Overnight closures of Rio Road at the Route 29 intersection will continue during the tie-back installation, which is expected to take eight to 10 weeks. During the closures, between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., traffic on Rio Road cannot cross Route 29 or make left turns onto Route 29. Left turns from Route 29 onto Rio Road are also restricted. Through traffic traveling north and south on Route 29 will be maintained, as will right turns from Route 29 onto Rio Road and from Rio Road eastbound to Route 29 southbound.

Business entrances on Route 29 north and south of the intersection, and on Rio Road east and west of Route 29, will remain open during the nighttime work. Signed detours are in place to direct traffic around the work zone.
Field archeology survey completed at Berkmar project

The field work for the archeological survey on the Berkmar Drive Extended project was completed in late January. The work, to document any prehistoric resources that may have been deposited along the north bank of the South Fork Rivanna River, was undertaken as part of the environmental work for the project.

The archeological survey along the South Fork Rivanna River involved painstaking excavation along the riverbank to recover any prehistoric resources.

A crew of archeologists excavated the area where the pier for the bridge over the river will be set, painstakingly digging and sifting dirt from several large rectangular pits to recover any material that might be associated with use of the area by humans before European settlement.

The team recovered a number of artifacts that, on initial observation, appeared to date from that era. Additional investigation and study will be done on the objects in the team’s lab and the results will be included in the final report on the survey.
After the field investigation was finished the area was backfilled, graded to restore the original contours and covered with material to stabilize the surface and prevent erosion.

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**Clearing, grading at Ashwood Blvd intersection**

During the past several weeks a significant amount of work related to the Route 29 Widening project began at the intersection of Route 29 and Ashwood Boulevard.

Land clearing is being done on the southeast corner of the intersection to build a storm water management pond at that location. Dominion Virginia Power is also relocating electric utility lines in that area.

The project required installation of a temporary traffic signal at the Route 29/Ashwood Boulevard intersection. The temporary signal poles are located farther from the roadway so widening can be done without disturbing the traffic signals. Permanent signal poles will be installed near the end of construction after the major widening work is completed.

Once the construction at the Ashwood Boulevard intersection is complete the contractor will restore the area. Dominion Virginia Power is responsible for restoring any areas disturbed by its activities.

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**Project Updates**

**Berkmar Drive Extension**

- The field work for the archeological investigation is complete. See the [Berkmar archeology news article](#) for details.
A large crane is positioned on the south bank of the South Fork Rivanna River to drive piles to support the Berkmar Drive Extended bridge over the river.

- The large crane has been moved from the Route 29-Rio GSI project to Berkmar. The crane is driving piles to support the bridge abutment on the south side of the South Fork Rivanna River.
- Construction activities also include: continued excavation and hauling to the Route 29 Widening project, grading and erosion control improvements.

**Route 29 Widening**

- Temporary signals have been installed and are active at Ashwood Boulevard and North Hollymead Drive intersections.
- Clearing for stormwater management pond is underway at the Ashwood Boulevard intersection. See the [Ashwood Blvd intersection news article](#) for details.
Construction activities also include: placing fill in the median, installing temporary drainage structures, utility relocations.
Nighttime travel impacts: Single lane closures both northbound and southbound during work that requires access to the travel lanes. At other times work is confined to areas behind permanent barriers.

**Rio Road/Route 29 Intersection**

- Nighttime pile driving is complete. Tie-back anchor installation has begun.
- Utility relocations were completed in early February.
- Other major construction activities include: storm drain construction, construction of Fashion Square retaining wall, installation of fire department connection pipe, grading for underdrain, curb and gutter and sidewalk in widening areas.
- Nighttime travel impacts: Rio crossover closed to through movements and left turns; triple lane closures northbound and southbound on Rt. 29.

**Route 29/250 Bypass Interchange**

- Construction of the retaining wall along the 250 Bypass is complete. Construction of the new lane on the entrance ramp has begun.
The retaining wall is complete on the Route 250 Bypass. The steel pilings will support the sound walls that will be built along the right shoulder of the westbound lanes.

- Installation of pedestrian lights, under-bridge lights are complete on Route 29.
- Other construction activities include: Work on the sound walls, storm drainage structures in the median of Route 250 and on the Barracks Road on-ramp; and subgrade preparation along Route 250 westbound.
- Travel impacts: Outside lane closures of Route 250 eastbound and westbound from Hydraulic to Barracks; ramp shoulder closures for storm drain installations.

**Traffic Signal Improvements**

- Signals at 15 intersections will be upgraded within the project budget to enable VDOT to better manage traffic during the Rio intersection closure.
- The improvements, which include communications and cameras, will be in place prior to the May 23 Rio intersection closure.

**Hillsdale Extended**

- The City of Charlottesville and VDOT are teaming up to keep this project on schedule. The city will continue to manage engineering and construction, while VDOT is picking up the responsibility for acquiring all of the right-of-way and manage utility relocations.
- 90 percent roadway design plans are posted on the Hillsdale Drive Extended project page on the Route 29 Solutions website.
- Right of way acquisition is under way.

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**Things You Should Know**

Placemaking: “Rio” is the winner
The Project Delivery Advisory Panel’s recommendation to VDOT is to name the general area around the Rio GSI “Rio,” which is consistent with the recommendations from marketing consultant SIR and from Albemarle County. The panel also agreed with the recommendation to use geographic designations for the intersection corners -- Rio NE, Rio SE, Rio NW and Rio SW.

Check out our progress with a new construction milestones schedule

A construction milestones schedule is now included in bi-weekly Project Delivery Advisory Panel presentations which are posted on the website. The schedule includes start and completion dates for major construction activities, and indicates whether the activity is on schedule. Overall project completion dates and current percent completes are also included.

County allows additional signing during construction

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors approved changes to the county’s temporary signing ordinance on Nov. 11, 2105. The changes include allowing one additional sign per property (not per business) for the duration of construction. The change took effect immediately.

Read Project Documents

Important new project documents are posted on the project website:

- Approved roadway construction plans and roadway cross-sections for Rio GSI are posted here: Roadway plans, Roadway cross-sections
- Approved roadway construction plans and roadway cross-sections for Berkmar Extended are posted here: Roadway plans, Roadway cross-sections
- Roadway design plans reflecting 90 percent
completion of the Hillsdale Drive Extended project are posted on the project page on VDOT’s Route 29 Solutions website. Find the plans here.

**On time. On budget.**

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

- February 2016: Utility relocation complete at Rio Road GSI 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

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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.

- 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
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.