The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) welcomes you to the design public hearing on the proposed widening of Route 29, the extension of Berkmar Drive and the grade separation of the intersection of Route 29 and Rio Road in Albemarle County.

This public hearing is held to provide an opportunity for citizens or organizations to give VDOT comments and/or suggestions on the proposed projects. VDOT representatives are here to discuss the projects and answer your questions.

VDOT strives to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in public decisions on transportation projects and programs affecting them.

Comments can be submitted either in writing or orally at the public hearing, in writing to Robert Strevell, Project Manager, 1601 Orange Road, Culpeper, VA 22701; or by email to Robert.Strevell@VDOT.Virginia.gov.

Comments must be postmarked, emailed or delivered to VDOT within 10 calendar days of today’s meeting (October 24, 2014) in order to be included in the public hearing record.

Ten days after this public hearing, on October 24, 2014, the public comment period will close. VDOT will review and evaluate any information received as a result of this hearing. This information, including the hearing summary, will be available for review at the VDOT office address listed below.

After all comments have been addressed, the information received as a result of the hearing will be presented to VDOT’s Chief Engineer or his designee for consideration. If approval of the major design features is received for this project, it will move forward to the final design phase. Public hearing participants will be notified of this decision by letter.

More information about these projects is available to the public on VDOT’s web site at www.Route29Solutions.org.

get involved

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Project Locations

Berkmar Drive Extended and Route 29 Widening Location Map

Rio Road Grade-Separated Intersection Location Map

© 2014 Commonwealth of Virginia
Berkmar Drive Extension
Hilton Heights Rd. to Towncenter Dr.

This project will construct a 2.3 mile-long extension of Route 1403 (Berkmar Drive) from its current terminus at Route 1438 (Hilton Heights Road) north to Route 1719 (Towncenter Drive).

The new roadway will be built on a new alignment. It is currently proposed as a two-lane roadway built on a four-lane right of way to allow for possible future expansion. A bridge will span the South Fork Rivanna River and Rio Mills Road.

Bike lanes, a sidewalk and a paved multi-use path will be included in the project. The bike lanes and multi-use path will provide links with existing facilities that will provide additional transportation options for those using the Route 29 corridor.

Estimated Project Cost

- Total Cost: $54,500,000
- Engineering of Roadway Plans: $2,400,000
- Right of Way Acquisition, Relocation Assistance and Utility Relocation: $13,900,000
- Construction: $38,200,000
- Cost is subject to change as the design is developed.

Environmental Review

VDOT's Culpeper District Environmental office has performed environmental reviews, field studies and coordination to obtain information about environmental resources in the vicinity of the projects; to provide natural and historic resource agencies an opportunity to review and comment on the projects during their development; and to identify opportunities for avoidance, minimization and mitigation of potential environmental impacts.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is applicable to the Route 29 Widening and Rio Road intersection project and Categorical Exclusions have been developed in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and in accordance with federal guidelines. The NEPA document includes information from various technical reviews including those related to natural resources, water quality, threatened and endangered species, air quality, noise, etc. In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed project on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is also provided in the environmental documentation.

The Berkmar Drive Extension project, a state funded project, has been coordinated through the State Environmental Review Process (SERP). The SERP provides State environmental resource agencies an opportunity to comment on the highway improvements at the project initiation stage. A Preliminary Environmental Inventory which discusses the information, views, and interests received from the resource agencies has been prepared for this project and is available for review at this public hearing.

The projects will continue to be coordinated with the appropriate federal, state and local agencies as part of environmental review and approval processes required throughout project development and construction. All required environmental clearances and permits will be obtained prior to commencement of construction. Strict compliance with all environmental conditions and commitments resulting from regulatory approvals and implementation of VDOT's specifications and standard best management practices will protect the environment during construction.

The NEPA document and the results of other environmental studies are available at tonight's meeting. Representatives are available to discuss this information and to answer questions.

Anticipated Schedule

The following schedule has been proposed for the three projects presented at this hearing:

- Public hearing: October 14, 2014
- Public comment period ends: October 24, 2014
- Right of way acquisition and utility relocation: Spring 2015 through Fall 2016

Design-Build contract award: February 2015
Construction begins: Fall 2015
Construction completion: October 2017

Project schedule is subject to change.

Right of Way

The three Route 29 Solutions projects presented for comment tonight (Route 29 widening, Route 29/Rio Road grade-separated intersection and Berkmar Drive Extension) will not require the displacement of any families, businesses or non-profit organizations.

As the design-builder further develops and finalizes these projects, additional easements for utility relocation may be required beyond the proposed right of way shown on the public hearing plans. The property owners will be informed of the exact location of the easements during the right of way acquisition process and prior to construction.

Information about right of way purchase is discussed in VDOT’s Right of Way and Utilities brochure, “A Guide for Property Owners and Tenants.” Copies of this brochure are available at the public hearing and from any VDOT right of way agent.

After the public hearing, information regarding right of way may be obtained from the Right of Way contact listed on the back of this brochure.
Local Lanes Local Lanes Thru Lanes
Route 29 looking North, approaching Rio Road

Local Lanes Local Lanes Thru Lanes
Route 29 looking North from Rio Road

Estimated Project Cost

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State Project – 0529-002-091, P101, R201, CS01, B651
Federal Project – NHPFP-002-704(S)  LPC – 106135

Project Description

Route 29 / Rio Road Grade-Separated Intersection

This project will separate through traffic on Route 29 from traffic on Rio Road by replacing the current at-grade intersection with a grade-separated intersection. Rio Road will remain at roughly the current grade while Route 29 will be reconstructed to separate through traffic and local traffic exiting at Rio Road and local businesses.

Grade separation of this intersection will move traffic more efficiently through one of the most congested intersections on the Route 29 corridor. Separating local and through traffic at this intersection, which has a history of high crash rates, will improve safety.

Four through lanes (two northbound, two southbound) will be constructed underneath Rio Road to carry traffic with destinations north or south of Rio Road. Local lanes will be built to the outside of the through lanes so traffic with destinations on or near Rio Road can leave Route 29 onto Rio Road or access nearby businesses using the local lanes.

The average annual daily traffic volume on Route 29 south of Rio Road is 56,000 vehicles; north of the intersection Route 29 carries approximately 46,000 vehicles per day (2013 counts). Rio Road east of Route 29 carries approximately 24,000 vehicles each day; while west of the intersection approximately 15,000 vehicles use Rio Road between Route 29 and Hydraulic Road.

Construction is scheduled to begin in 2015 and will be completed no later than October 2017. During construction two lanes of traffic in each direction on Route 29 will be maintained at all times.

Construction that disrupts the Rio Road intersection must be done between May 23 and Sept. 2, 2016 (the period between Final Exercises at the University of Virginia and UVa’s first home football game). During that time the Rio Road intersection will be closed to through traffic and left turns. Traffic on Rio Road will be limited to right turns only from Rio Road onto Route 29.
Route 29 Widening
Polo Grounds Road to Towncenter Drive

The purpose of this project is to widen Route 29 (Seminole Trail) from a four-lane divided highway to a six-lane divided highway from Route 643 (Polo Grounds Road) to Route 1719 (Towncenter Drive).

The project will increase the roadway capacity, which will reduce congestion on this heavily traveled section of Route 29. The project also includes safety improvements at previously identified locations.

Improvement of this 1.8-mile-long section will complete the widening of Route 29 north to Route 649 (Airport/Proffit Road). In addition to widening Route 29 the project will include reconstruction of some sections of the existing highway to eliminate sight distance deficiencies and improve overall safety.

The roadway will be designed with curb and gutter and sidewalks on both sides. VDOT is currently evaluating the inclusion of a paved shared-use path on the east side of Route 29.

Construction of this project is scheduled to begin in 2016 and will be completed in October 2017. During construction two lanes of traffic and all existing access points will be maintained in both directions.

Estimated Project Cost

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Cost is subject to change as the design is developed.