



**Route 29 Project Delivery Advisory Panel  
January 19, 2017  
Summary Meeting Minutes**

NOTE: The meeting video is posted at [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org).

Meeting 60 of the Route 29 Project Delivery Advisory Panel (PDAP) was held at the Virginia Transportation Research Council in Charlottesville, Virginia on January 19, 2017. Meeting information included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Presentation addressing agenda items

All material distributed at the meeting is available at [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org)

In attendance: Pete Borches, Chip Boyles, Morgan Butler, Mark Graham, Kristin Szakos, Brad Sheffield, Chris Engel, Henry Weinschenk. Facilitator: Philip Shucet.

Absent: Karen Weiner.

VDOT and City of Charlottesville Technical Team members were also in attendance.

1. Charlie Kilpatrick, Commissioner of Highways, commended the project team and contractor Lane-Corman for finishing the Rio GSI early and presented Lane-Corman representatives with a ceremonial check for the incentive bonus earned in the amount of \$7,335,497. Closure of the Rio intersection was scheduled for 103 days last summer and instead took just 57 days. Kilpatrick noted that the GSI and the other projects didn't exist three years ago and now two projects are complete and the remaining projects are set to open later this year. He also commended the process that led to the package of projects and their delivery, particularly the Project Delivery Advisory Panel and the associated community involvement efforts.

2. Aubrey Layne, Secretary of Transportation thanked the PDAP members for their hard work and announced that at request of the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO, a study of the Hydraulic Road and Route 29 intersection will commence in the next couple months. A copy of the secretary's remarks are attached.

- Kristin Szakos suggested that another contributing factor for moving the projects swiftly was that they were fully funded.

- Morgan Butler thanked VDOT for a successful process and said he hopes the state will use the Route 29 Solutions model on other road projects.
- Henry Weinschenk said he appreciates the speed and professionalism of the project and project team. He also asked that VDOT consider a parallel highway to Route 29 similar to past proposals for Interstate 83.

### 3. Interaction and Feedback:

Twelve e-mails and phone calls were received and no new comments were made on the Provide Input section of [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org). Seven e-mails and calls were made to the project hotline and to Lane Corman. A summary of comments is included in the meeting presentation which is posted on the project website [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org). In response:

- Joel DeNunzio said VDOT is reviewing security around the access opening for the sound wall at the Barracks Road exit ramp for the Route 29/250 interchange project.
- Project team concluded that advanced signing for a “3-Way Stop” is not necessary on the approaches to Berkmar Drive and Hilton Heights intersection.
- Project team reviews pavement markings monthly at the Rio GSI and recommends no additional changes at this time.

4. Report on PDAP Feedback. Details are included in the meeting presentation which is posted on the project website [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org). Additional information:

- New state funding for Hillsdale incentive will be discussed during project updates.

### 5. Panel Feedback/Open Discussion.

- In response to Kristen Szakos, Philip Shucet said the state has programmed \$1 million for the current fiscal year and \$1 million for next fiscal year. A new advisory panel of 10 to 12 people will be formed and the first phase will be a small area plan/land use plan with the help of a VDOT on-call consultant. About half way through that process, VDOT may bring on another consultant to examine transportation solutions that come out of the land use study. If the city, county and MPO endorse a transportation project or projects, the second consultant will conduct the work required for a Smart Scale application for September 2018. (The CTB recently discussed moving up the application deadline to summer rather than the fall.)
- Pete Borches said he hopes the new panel will be balanced with business and government representatives. He noted that this panel became unbalanced when several business members resigned.
- Philip Shucet said panel members will be named in February and the first meeting will be in March.
- Morgan Butler requested that an update on the new train set that’s part of the Route 29 Solutions package be added to a future agenda.
- Morgan Butler suggested that the county give thought to access management along Berkmar Extended, noting that allowing too many entrances could eat into capacity.

- Mark Graham said VDOT has an access management policy in place and the county may consider whether it wants something different for that road. He added the county is concerned about speeding because it's a 2-mile stretch of road with no entrances currently. A review of VDOT's access management policy will be on the February agenda.
- Pete Borches suggested a Rio Mills connection could be the first Berkmar access point.
- Dave Covington noted there is one access point for farm equipment associated with a local farming operation.
- Pete Borches reminded the county of the opportunity to provide access to the Rivanna River at the new Berkmar bridge.
- Mark Graham said he agrees that river access presents a good opportunity and the county is working with Game and Inland Fisheries on potential boat access.

6. Construction Milestones: Chart is included in presentation posted on [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org).

- Route 29 water line is 50 percent complete.
- Berkmar roadway construction is 85 percent and 90 percent complete.
- Hillsdale bridge substructure is 90 percent complete.
- In response to Kristen Szakos, Dave Covington said it is possible to move up the installment of Phase 2 of adaptive signals because the projects will be finished early, however the biggest obstacle could be the procurement of equipment.

7. Route 29 Solutions Project Updates: Dave Covington reviewed project updates. Updates with photographs are included in the presentation posted on [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org).

Bullets below reflect additional information and discussion other than that included in the presentation.

- Route 29 Widening
  - Beginning January 23 (moved to January 25), there will be phased nighttime lane closures of Ashwood with detours on North Hollymead for water main crossing. During the day, work will be covered with steel plates. Sometime over the next month, the entrance will be closed for two nights; the exit will be closed for two nights; then the intersection will be paved over one night. Project team is coordinating with the residents of Forest Lakes.
- Berkmar Extended
  - Work proceeding on the shared use path and sidewalk.
  - When weather permits, asphalt will be applied to the roadway.

- Berkmar and Hilton Heights always had a confusing stop condition so it's changing to a 3-way stop now and later will be a roundabout. One access to Sam's Club will be closed during roundabout construction.
  - Philip Shucet requested a placard be added to the stop sign that notes it's a 3-way stop.
  - Henry Weinschenk noted that a full road closure isn't necessary for this roundabout whereas it is for Hillsdale. Dave Covington explained that the Berkmar roundabout location is slightly outside of the existing right of way.
- Hillsdale Extension provided by Jeanette Janiczek/City of Charlottesville:
    - Retaining wall between Pepsi and Post Office will be complete in two weeks.
    - An incentive bonus has been added to the contract: If the roundabout is completed in one month versus the scheduled two months and the entire project is complete on schedule the contractor will receive a \$150,000 incentive payment. If the contractor finishes the entire project a month early, there's another \$200,000 incentive payment.
    - Henry Weinschenk asked when the road will close for the roundabout construction. Jeanette Janiczek said that with the incentive payment on the table, the contractor is pushing the work to when the weather is better.
    - In response to Henry Weinschenk, Jeanette Janiczek said the opening of the Homewood Suites section originally set to open late 2016 will now open by mid-February after the contractor reprioritized work.
    - Kristen Szakos noted that geese were relocated from a pond. Jeanette Janiczek said there's another pond nearby.

8. Construction Budget Update. Chart is included in the presentation posted on [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org).

- Philip Shucet noted that the design-build projects are on track for finishing under budget.

9. Accident Report Update (Post-Rio GSI opening period) from Joel DeNunzio. Presentation posted on project website [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org)

- Statistics are updated through the end of October.
- Joel DeNunzio said the number of crashes, July 19 - Oct 31 over a 5-year period shows that crashes have about halved after the completion of the Rio GSI, with 16 crashes in 2016 compared to a range of 22 to 38 over the previous four years. He noted that it's still too early to draw conclusions, adding that one of the goals of the new design was to improve safety.
- Joel DeNunzio also noted the average number of crashes per month is below the monthly average in each of the last four years.

10. New Business and Wrap Up

- Philip Shucet said the conference room at the Virginia Transportation Research Council is booked for the next scheduled meeting February 16 so the meeting location is moving to the Charlottesville-Albemarle MPO office located at Water Street Center, 407 East Water Street.

The next panel meeting is February 16, 2017, at 2 p.m.

The meeting was open to the public, streamed live, and is available on video at [route29solutions.org](http://route29solutions.org)

**Remarks to the Route 29 Solutions Project Delivery Advisory Panel  
By Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne, Jan. 19, 2017**

With your help, more progress has been made in improving the Route 29 corridor in the Charlottesville area in past 3 years than in the previous 30 years.

I know the solutions were not everyone's first choice, including some of you on the panel. I sincerely appreciate the debate and difficult discussions that took place. But in the end we opted to make improvements that were endorsed by the city, the county and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

At your first meeting I asked you advise VDOT during the development and delivery of the Rt. 29 Solutions projects on matters regarding design, environmental permitting, construction, maintenance of traffic and public safety.

Your deliberations and recommendations contributed to the development and delivery of the projects at every step:

- Accelerating the deadline for completing the Best Buy Ramp project.
- Adding contract modifications to limit and restrict lane closures to reduce congestion during construction and assure that adequate mobility and accessibility were available at all times for motorists and local businesses.
- Ensuring that business entrances remained open during business hours — including for businesses who stayed open with extended hours
- Preparing videos and get-around maps to help the public access businesses
- Adding aesthetic treatments to the projects, including landscaping, crosswalks and entrances with stamped brick, pedestrian lighting, and the architectural treatments and staining applied to sound walls, retaining walls and the Rio Road overpass.
- Revising the scope of work to include pedestrian and bike facilities on the Route 29 Widening project and the Berkmar Drive project.
- Adding funding for your direct participation in the steering committee for the business assistance program, including development of the branding and marketing campaign to support local businesses
- Adding signalized pedestrian crossings of Rt. 29 at Rt. 29/250 in the City and at the Rio Road GSI and the Rt. 29 Widening project in Albemarle Co. - the first signalized pedestrian crossings in Albemarle Co.

While I'm extremely pleased that the contractor, Lane-Corman, and VDOT reopened the Rio GSI in a record-setting 57 days, your work during the past two and a half years has more importantly set a new standard for transparency and accountability that has permeated every aspect of VDOT, the Secretariat, and the Commonwealth.

And now I want to let you know about the next steps we are taking to consider further improvements to the Rt. 29 Corridor.

Today I'm pleased to announce that at the request of your MPO we are kicking off a study of the Hydraulic Road and Rt. 29 intersection area.

This study will be constrained to a geographical area in and around the Hydraulic Road and Rt. 29 intersection but will also include the area around the proposed Hillsdale South connection to Rt. 250.

The Plan will be conducted in two phases with guidance and input from an Advisory Panel just as we collaborated with the Advisory Panels over the past 2 1/2 years.

The first phase of work at Hydraulic will focus on land use planning to be sure that any transportation improvements consider and support what the city and county identify as desirable land uses in the Hydraulic - Rt. 29 area.

A consultant will be engaged by VDOT, but managed by the MPO to assure that the land use phase concentrates on goals established by the city and county.

The second phase of work will consider reasonable transportation alternatives — including the option of doing nothing — that can improve mobility and accessibility in the area by supporting future anticipated land uses. A consultant will also be engaged to assist with the transportation planning and engineering phase.

It is important to emphasize here that the land use decisions will be made by the city, county and the MPO.

Likewise, before any transportation improvements that require state or federal funding move forward, the city, county and the MPO will need to endorse those projects and submit them for scoring and consideration by the CTB through the Smart Scale process.

There are no preconceived solutions or presumptions here. We are kicking off a process at the MPO's request. The outcome of that process remains to be seen.

I've asked the Executive Director of the MPO to work with the city and county to suggest community and business members who may be considered for the new Advisory Panel. I expect this panel to be formed during February, and expect the new panel to have its first meeting in March.

I've suggested that the land use planning phase be completed in 6 months or before the end of August. Because there is necessary interplay between land use and transportation planning, I expect the transportation planning and engineering phase to get underway in May or June.

If transportation projects are expected to move forward to Smart Scale scoring, the transportation engineering work must be completed in time for the localities to prepare applications for Smart Scale submissions and scoring in September 2018. While that may seem like a distant date now, considering the work required to prepare projects for Smart Scale applications, the time will pass quickly.

Once again, before closing, please be aware that the decision to move any projects forward rests with the city, the county and the MPO. The final decision to fund a project will rest with the CTB.