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Sunday, July 20, 2014

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Update on Local Road Projects

Reviewing Stringfellow, Route 50 and two bridges.



A newly asphalted section of the widened Stringfellow Road between Chantilly High and Rocky Run Middle School. Photo by [Bonnie Hobbs](#).

By [Bonnie Hobbs](#)

[Thursday, July 17, 2014](#)

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Photo by Bonnie Hobbs

Workmen on Wednesday smooth and level a freshly cemented curb at the corner of Stringfellow and Poplar Tree roads.

When Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully) addressed the Sully District Council of Citizens Associations on June 25, he also provided an update

on local road projects. A Fairfax County transportation bond was discussed, as well.

“There will be a transportation bond this year, probably for \$100 million,” he said. “About 15 or 16 million will be for roadway projects and 84 or 85 million will be for pedestrian and walkway projects. That includes bike lanes and bike-way improvements, and that’s a huge shift. We used to do these bonds for roads and Metro.”

“I think there should have been a better balance,” continued Frey. “Some items are for pedestrian crosswalks that shouldn’t be paid for with 20-year debt, but with capital improvement funds.”

Locally, he said this year and next year will be busy with a slew of road and bridge projects. Said Frey: “A lot of the transportation projects we’ve been talking about for a long time are finally breaking loose because of VDOT money.”

They include:

- **Walney Road Bridge and Widening:** The existing, Walney Road bridge over Flatlick Branch is disintegrating structurally and surpassed its life expectancy 17 years ago. So VDOT is replacing it with a wider, sturdier and safer bridge.

The new bridge will have a four-lane capacity with bike lanes. Walney Road will also be widened from two to four lanes from 250 feet south of Mariah Court to Willard Road.

In addition, the downhill curve on north-south Walney will be smoothed out significantly to make it descend gradually. The road will also be raised 10 feet higher in the area where it currently dips down as drivers leave the bridge, for better sight distance.

Utility relocation should begin in September or October, with construction slated to start in January 2015, in hopes of a December 2015 completion.

Because of the work, the bridge will be closed from May 1, 2015 to Aug. 30, 2015. Estimated cost is \$15.5 million.

- **Route 50 Widening West of Chantilly:** Construction began in fall 2011 to widen 3.7 miles of Route 50 from four to six lanes between Poland Road in Loudoun County and Route 28 in Chantilly.

Currently, Route 50 narrows from six lanes to four just west of Route 28 in Chantilly. But increased development and congestion in Loudoun County creates backups during much of the day on the existing four-lane segment, especially during morning and evening rush hours.

When completed, traffic-clogged Route 50 will have three lanes in each direction, improved turn lanes and traffic signals, curb and gutter on the outside lanes, crosswalks and pedestrian signals, widened and upgraded bridges, and pathways on both sides of the road. The road will also be more level and provide wider buffers between travel lanes and roadside hazards.

This \$100 million improvement project should have three lanes open in both directions by May 2015. All the construction work, including permanent traffic signals, should be finished in November 2015.

- **Stringfellow Road:** The part of Stringfellow between I-66 and Route 29 was four-laned in the 1990s by Fairfax County's Department of Transportation. Now, the section from I-66/Fair Lakes Boulevard to Route 50 will also go from two to four lanes, providing a faster conduit between Route 50 in Chantilly and Route 29 in Clifton/Centreville.

Planned are four travel lanes — two, 12 feet wide, and two, 14 feet wide; a 10-foot multipurpose trail, a 6-foot sidewalk and a raised, 16-foot, grass median. And bicyclists will not only share the trail with pedestrians, but also pedal side-by-side with cars, trucks and buses on each outer, 14-foot lane.

Utility relocation has already been done and construction is now underway; it's expected to be done in mid-summer 2015. Estimated cost is \$63 million.

- **Stringfellow Road Park and Ride Expansion:** Adjacent to I-66, the existing park-and-ride lot on Stringfellow Road has 378 parking spaces. A 2007 bond referendum funded an additional 300 spaces, plus a bus-transfer facility with a climate-controlled waiting room, benches, restrooms, drinking fountain and bike racks.

The costs are \$4 million for the parking expansion and \$1.5 million for the bus-transfer building, and they've been combined into one project. The goal is to enhance bus ridership and promote carpooling and, ultimately, the use of Metrorail when it's someday extended to this area.

The county's Department of Transportation will construct and maintain the building, and VDOT – which owns the land – will maintain the parking spaces. Cars will enter and exit the lot from the Stringfellow/Fair Lakes Boulevard intersection, and the existing entrance on Stringfellow will be for buses only. Construction is beginning this summer and should be completed in spring 2015.

- **Route 29 Bridge Replacement:** VDOT is currently replacing the Route 29 bridge over the Little Rocky Run stream in Centreville. Besides improving the bridge, itself, the project will also result in a new sidewalk and shared-use path. The new bridge will go from .2 miles east of Pickwick Road to Union Mill Road and will be just under a half-mile long.

It will be built six lanes wide to accommodate future traffic, but will initially be striped for four lanes. A 16-foot-wide, raised, grass, median strip will separate north- and southbound lanes. Each outer lane will be 15-feet wide, with the outermost three feet earmarked for bicycle riders.

On the bridge's south side, a path will connect to existing trails. The north side will have a 5-foot-wide sidewalk connecting to the Faircrest community and existing sidewalks. Estimated cost is \$16.3 million and anticipated completion is October 2015.

“The construction will cause some inconvenience,” said Frey. “But when you sit in traffic caused by construction, at least you know an improvement is being made.”

- **Lee Road Widening/Culvert:** The box culvert there will be extended, and Lee Road will be widened over Schneider Branch. Construction began in March and should be finished in May 2015. Estimated cost is \$4.2 million.
- **I-66 and Route 28:** Portions of the existing interchange will be reconstructed, and four traffic signals on Route 28 will be removed to enhance safety and improve capacity. A VDOT study is underway. VDOT already has \$50 million programmed for this project. Cost estimate: \$322 million. Six-year funding recently approved by FCDOT: \$54 million.



Photo by Bonnie Hobbs

Work progresses along Route 29 in Centreville as part of the bridge replacement over the Little Rocky Run stream.

The work also includes widening and reconstructing the westbound I-66 off ramp to northbound Route 28. Braddock/Walney roads will be realigned, and an overpass with ramp connection from northbound Route 28 to the new bridge will be constructed. New connections will go from Braddock to eastbound and westbound I-66, from Braddock to and from southbound Route 28, and from southbound Route 28 to eastbound I-66 (flyover).

This project extends Poplar Tree Road across Route 28 from Stonecroft Boulevard to Walney Road. It also involves construction of a new access road to E.C. Lawrence Park and reduces congestion on both I-66 and Route 28.

“The Route 28/I-66 design will be a physically huge improvement,” said Frey. “If Braddock and Walney are to have access to Route 28, it’ll take separation and four ramps. Sometime before the end of the year, another [public] meeting will be held about it.”

“I’ve been told it’ll be in construction by 2017,” he continued. “It seems like a long way off, but it’s actually pretty aggressive when you consider that you’re dealing with a federal highway, environmental issues in E.C. Lawrence Park and a residential development.”

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