

Road Changes Are on the Horizon

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

On the horizon for local residents are transportation projects, some school-boundary changes and several fun-filled, family events to enjoy.

Save These Dates

Area residents may attend a variety of upcoming, family-friendly events:

Monday, Sept. 1, Custom Cruisers of Northern Virginia 15th Annual Car Show, in the Town of Clifton. Event features classic, new and hot rod cars, motorcycles, food and music; proceeds go to charity.

Saturday, Sept. 13, Clifton KidFest, in the Town of Clifton. Children's games and vendors, plus food and fun.

Saturday, Oct. 11, Centreville Day, in the Centreville Historic District. Food, crafts, vendors, music.

Saturday, Oct. 11, Fairfax Fall Festival, downtown City of Fairfax. Crafts, food, vendors, music, rides.

Sunday, Oct. 12, Clifton Day, in the Town of Clifton. Crafts vendors, food, music and fun throughout the town.

Saturday, Oct. 25, Clifton Haunted Trail, 8-Acre Park, Town of Clifton.

School Boundary Changes

In May 2013, the Fairfax County School Board approved boundary changes to alleviate overcrowding at Fairfax High and Lanier Middle School. And this September, some of them will affect Chantilly students who attended those schools.

The changes move students in the Greenbriar West Elementary attendance area east of Stringfellow Road from Lanier Middle and Fairfax High to Rocky Run Middle and Chantilly High, eliminating the former split-feeder assignment for Greenbriar West.

The boundary changes are being phased in during the 2014-15 school year. This fall's rising eighth-grade students, juniors and seniors will be allowed to remain at their current schools.

In addition, students living in the Penderbrook and Fairfax Farms areas of the Waples Mill Elementary attendance area were reassigned last year from Lanier Middle to Franklin Middle. Starting in September, these students will also shift from Fairfax High to Oakton High.

Transportation Projects

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in January approved \$1.4 billion to fund transportation projects for FY 2015 to FY 2020. As a result, many of these much-needed improvements will transition from



Melody Wilson of Ms. P's Concessions serves a funnel cake during Centreville Day 2013.

the planning stage to the construction phase over the next six years. Below are some of the local-area projects – some fully funded, some partially funded – that may now move forward:

❖ **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.

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. Construction is expected to begin by 2017.

❖ **Route 29 from Union Mill Road to Buckley's Gate Drive:**

This project provides pedestrian facilities on the north side of Route 29 and widens Route 29 in this area from four to six lanes. It complements the VDOT bridge-replacement project at Little Rocky Run and completes the widening of Route 29 from Shirley Gate Road to Centreville.

It's currently the last segment of Route 29 between the City of Fairfax and Centreville that's not six lanes, so this work would eliminate the last remaining bottleneck. Cost estimate: \$32.7 million; approved: \$25 million.

❖ **Stone Road Overpass over I-66 from Route 29 to Route 28:**

This project provides an alternative to Route 28 that goes from Centreville to the Westfields Corporate Center. It received partial funding for an alignment study, environmental analysis and preliminary engi-



As Signora Bella, Jody Ellis juggles fire on a tightrope at last year's Centreville Day.

neering. Cost estimate: \$81.55 million; amount approved: \$5 million.

Construct a four-lane divided road between Stone Road at Route 29 and New Braddock Road. The work includes curb and gutter, a 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk on the east side and a 10-foot-wide shared-use path on the west side of Stone Road.

Construct a bridge over I-66 and another bridge over Big Rocky Run. Re-stripe westbound New Braddock Road to provide two, through travel lanes. This overpass could reduce congestion at the I-66/Route 28 and I-66/Route 29 interchanges. In addition, a future Metrorail station near this site is listed on the county's Comprehensive Plan.

❖ **Widening Route 28** from Old Centreville Road to Prince William County line at Bull Run:

Widen this stretch of road from four to six lanes. The work includes intersection improvements, plus pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Cost estimate: \$47.35 million; approved: \$47.35 million.

It complements the I-66/Route 28 Interchange and, in conjunction with other road projects, would complete the Route 28 Corridor through the entire county. This



Traffic heads west on Route 50 through the work zone near Pleasant Valley Road, before the late-afternoon rush.



A drizzly morning couldn't keep the crowds away from last year's Clifton Day.

project includes intersection improvements, as well as pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

A large development just south of the county line is expected to exacerbate existing congestion. So this widening reduces significant congestion between Prince William and Centreville. And as a transportation corridor of regional significance, it would improve access to Dulles International Airport, Reston and Herndon.

Road Projects Already Underway Or Starting Soon

❖ **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.

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Chantilly
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NEWCOMERS
& COMMUNITY GUIDE

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NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE



Workmen across from Rocky Run Middle School create what will be an asphalt bicycle-and-pedestrian trail along Stringfellow Road.



Southbound motorists are directed onto the old section of Stringfellow Road, while northbound traffic drives beside the new portion not yet open.



Site plan of the park-and-ride expansion. The new parking spaces are in yellow.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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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.



Drivers heading toward Centreville pass the construction site on Route 29 near Union Mill Road.

❖ 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 begins 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-foot 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.

❖ 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.

❖ Roundabout at the Braddock/Pleasant Valley roads intersection:

In June, the Commonwealth Transportation Board greenlighted a VDOT-supported plan to build a controversial roundabout to improve traffic flow at the Braddock/Pleasant Valley roads intersection by Cox Farms in Centreville.

Although Loudoun County commuters are thrilled, many local residents are opposed to it. They say the steady stream of basically unimpeded Loudoun drivers flooding Braddock and Pleasant Valley roads will prevent them from leaving their neighborhoods.

They're also worried about safety and the environment. Just east of Braddock Road is the notorious S-curve, so improving that intersection could cause dangerous backups there, instead. In addition, three land quadrants surrounding the intersection contain sensitive parkland. Current estimated project cost is nearly \$6 million.



VDOT's diagram of the proposed roundabout at Braddock and Pleasant Valley roads in Centreville.