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February 6, 2015

Dear Albemarle County Resident,

Thank you for your interest in the Route 29 Solutions Package. There are very few issues in this community that have been discussed and debated as long as the Route 29 corridor. While many other communities like ours have moved forward with major transportation investments, Albemarle County has remained in gridlock of deliberation. We now have a real opportunity to start addressing some of our long standing problems, and prepare this community for its inevitable growth.

In December 1991 the Virginia Department of Transportation, City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County agreed to build the Rio Grade Separated Interchange along with several other projects, including the Western Bypass. Technical drawings for the Rio intersection were developed as early as 1994. Unfortunately, that same year politics interfered and all but the US29 widening project were stopped. Since then this community has remained paralyzed, unable to make improvements on the US29 corridor. Fast forwarding to 2014, the Board of Supervisors saw an opportunity to keep millions of transportation funding in this area and, on February, 19 2014 after a lengthy public hearing, defined their support for these projects. On May 27, 2014, after the Commonwealth Transportation Board agreed to fund the projects, the Board approved the Route 29 Solutions Package. In response to long standing concerns and misinformation, VDOT implemented an extensive public involvement process that included representatives from the business community, the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, the MPO and the Piedmont Environmental Council. Since July, this group has been meeting even two weeks reviewing every step of the process and detail of the projects.

I believe, and the majority of the Board of Supervisors concur, the Rio/US29 Grade Separated Interchange will make a substantial improvement to the US29 corridor. Not only will it improve traffic flow in all four directions, it will significantly improve the traffic management. In the last 10 years a lot of focus has been on maximizing the effectiveness of our transportation network. This means improving aspects like turning movements and signal timing, and separating the traffic flow at the intersection of major corridors. This

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investment will also provide us with a better opportunity for redevelopment and revitalization. Research shows that improvements to neighborhood and urban infrastructure results in improved land use quality. Improved traffic conditions will mean more commercial activity. Just as important, improving this intersection will prepare this community for the daunting, and fully approved, growth north of the river. Tens of thousands of cars can be added to US29 whenever developers are ready to start building. This intersection, as well as many other infrastructure aspects of our community cannot handle this demand. If nothing is done, current and future increased traffic will be sent through our neighborhoods, causing irreversible damage to home values and quality of life. This intersection must be improved in order for this community to get ahead of future burdens.

Since the late 80s there have numerous studies and analysis conducted for this corridor. I encourage you to explore the [www.route29solutions.org](http://www.route29solutions.org) website and contact the Charlottesville/Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization, or visit their website, to better understand what has been done over the last 20 years and what this projects means for our community's transportation infrastructure.

There is a lot of misinformation circulating in the community, and VDOT has taken a completely new approach to informing and engaging the public on all of these projects. This mixture makes for a lot of confusion, uncertainty, concerns and questions. Like many of the other Supervisors, I have been fully engaged in this process; reviewing past and recent data, talking with residents and meeting with VDOT every two weeks. This is my professional background and I am immersed in a lot of the details, so I remain available to answer any and all questions regarding these projects.

I encourage you to use the many tools on the VDOT website mentioned above, and on the County website at [www.albemarle.org/rt29](http://www.albemarle.org/rt29) to stay aware of the most accurate, up to date information and to access all available resources, including having a project team member come and speak to your neighborhood association or community group. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Brad Sheffield  
Rto District Supervisor