



NEWS RELEASE

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OPAL INTERCHANGE PROJECT ADVERTISED FOR CONSTRUCTION

Bids due on Aug. 25; work scheduled to begin in the fall

CULPEPER — Improvements to the Route 15/29 and Route 17 intersection at Opal are moving toward construction. The Virginia Department of Transportation advertised the project for construction bids on June 22. “Advertisement of this project is a major milestone,” said Jim Utterback, VDOT’s Culpeper District administrator. “The improvement of this intersection has long been a priority for both VDOT and Fauquier County and we eagerly anticipate its completion.”

The project will build a flyover ramp to replace the left-turn lanes for southbound traffic turning from Route 15/29 onto Route 17. The ramp will allow turning traffic to exit from the right lane onto the ramp and merge onto Route 17 south of the intersection. Removing the left turn movement for through traffic turning onto Route 17 will significantly improve safety and efficiency of the traffic flow, especially at peak volumes such as the afternoon rush hour. Traffic turning left onto Route 17 now often backs up into the southbound lanes, causing congestion and a safety hazard for traffic approaching the intersection. One left turn lane will remain for local traffic bound for the businesses on Route 17.

Bids for the project, which has a total estimated cost of \$44.6 million, including engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction, are due on Aug. 25. Once the bid-review process is completed the Commonwealth Transportation Board must formally award the project. That will likely happen at its September meeting. Construction will begin within 30 days following the award. The project is scheduled for completion in August 2013.

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