

For Immediate Release
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LIVE ON-SITE INTERVIEWS AND MEDIA AVAILABILITY MAY BE SCHEDULED

WORK SHIFTING ONE DAY LATER **FIRST HALF OF NEW ROUTE 1 BELTWAY OVERPASS OPENS TO** **TRAFFIC THIS SUNDAY**

Southbound Route 1 and Most Route 1 Ramps Closed on Sunday

Alexandria, Va. – Motorists will begin driving on the first half of the new Route 1/Capital Beltway overpass as early as this Sunday (***note work has shifted to one day later than original release***) when crews switch all Route 1 lanes onto the newly-constructed elevated roadway. Both directions of Route 1-traffic now are scheduled to be transferred onto the new overpass on or about Sunday, March 4, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather during or leading up to this weekend's operation, the traffic switch will be rescheduled. Completing the first half of the overpass signifies significant progress toward completing overall improvements to the Route 1 interchange that, ultimately, will provide relief to the 115,000 daily drivers who travel through the area.

The new traffic pattern will be very noticeable to local Virginia drivers, as all lanes will be shifted onto a completely new overpass approximately 180 feet east of the current roadway alignment.

“The new Route 1 overpass is the centerpiece of improvements to the Route 1 interchange and is critical to relieving the daily back-ups that occur on Route 1 when approaching the Beltway,” remarked Ronaldo T. Nicholson, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation project manager. “Switching traffic to the first half of the new bridge marks significant progress in providing relief to local commuters who have faced chronic congestion in this area for years.”

Drivers on Route 1 in Alexandria should prepare for heavy traffic impacts all day Sunday, as implementing the traffic switch will require extensive temporary ramp and lane closures at and around the affected area. The closures are necessary to mill and pave connections to and from the new Route 1 alignment and Beltway ramps, complete paving and striping work, and relocate traffic signal poles on the north- and south ends of the overpass. Travelers are urged to avoid the area by choosing an alternate route. Less severe impacts will occur as early as Saturday after 2:00 p.m., as new traffic patterns take effect for some motorists. Travelers are urged to allow extra time when traveling the Route 1 Interchange area this weekend. *Specific traffic impacts on next page:*

SPECIFICS:

When: Saturday (3/3) after 2:00 p.m.

Outer Loop to northbound Route 1: New Traffic Pattern

New traffic pattern to begin for motorists traveling from I-95 North/Beltway Outer Loop to northbound Route 1. Motorists will exit the Outer Loop at the same location, but will take a detour ramp that connects them to Route 1 North, rather than using the current traffic signal to head northbound. Outer Loop to Route 1 North motorists will be the first to travel on the new Route 1 overpass and will get by in one lane until all lanes have been opened on the new roadway late Sunday. This temporary detour ramp will no longer be needed once the entire overpass is completed in 2008. The ramp includes loops and slow curves and drivers are advised to use caution. Slower speeds of 20 miles per hour are recommended on this ramp.

When: Sunday (3/4) from 4 a.m. until as late as 10 p.m.

Closures and Detours:

➤ **Southbound Route 1 closed immediately after Beltway ramps**

Detour: I-95 South/Beltway Inner Loop to Telegraph Road South Exit to access I-95 North/Beltway Outer Loop and then exit at Route 1 South. Access to I-95 North/Beltway Outer Loop across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge toward Maryland will remain.

➤ **One of Two Lanes Closed on Northbound Route 1**

A single lane will be closed on northbound Route 1 for the majority of Sunday, with one lane maintained at all times.

➤ **Ramps from northbound Route 1 to Beltway Outer and Inner Loops**

Detour: Huntington Avenue to Telegraph Road to I-95 North/Outer Loop or I-95 South/Inner Loop

➤ **Ramps from Inner Loop to Route 1 North and South**

Detour: Continue on I-95 South/Beltway Inner Loop to Telegraph Road Exit to access Outer Loop and exit onto Route 1 North or South.

➤ **Franklin Street Between Henry Street and Route 1**

Detour: Fayette to Wilkes to Route 1

➤ **Westbound Fort Hunt Road between Huntington Avenue and Route 1**

Detour: Huntington Avenue West to Route 1

Ramp and roadway closures will be reopened gradually on Sunday, with everything open and all four lanes (two northbound/two southbound) traveling on the new overpass no later than 10 p.m.

Once traffic is switched to the new Route 1 overpass, crews will begin demolishing the existing bridge in order to make room for the second new half of the overpass to be built. When finished, the Route 1 overpass will provide six lanes, as compared with four lanes currently.

Construction on the \$147 million Route 1 Interchange began in early 2004. By the close of 2006, four of eleven new Capital Beltway ramps had been completed, already improving traffic and safety for motorists. As shown by this weekend's opening, tangible proof of improvements at the Route 1 Interchange is continuing to become evident. The entire Route 1 interchange is scheduled to open to traffic in 2008, with substantial completion in 2009.

Just east of Route 1, additional project milestones are being met, as final details to the new Washington Street deck that passes over the Beltway are being completed. The new deck is scheduled for completion this spring/summer and will feature wide sidewalks, a bike path and verdant landscaping. By 2008, the majority of the rebuilt interchanges at MD 210 and I-295, as well as the second new Woodrow Wilson Bridge also are scheduled to be in service, providing much smoother and safer travel.

While the overall Woodrow Wilson Bridge Project is 67 percent finished, the Virginia Route 1 Interchange presently is 71 percent done. The other four major project elements are at the following stages of completion:

- Potomac River Bridges: 84 percent
- Interstate 295 Interchange: 74 percent
- Maryland 210 Interchange: 55 percent
- Telegraph Road Interchange (final component of entire project): 11 percent

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