



# INSIDENOVA

## PRINCE WILLIAM

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**InTheKnow**



**FINDING BABY YODA**

Disney's surprising character leaves few memorable options.

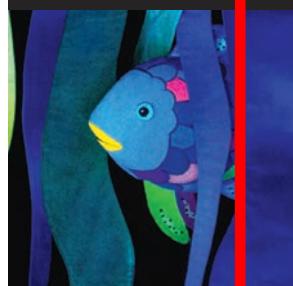
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**KINDRED SPIRIT**

Brentsville's Cara Vollmer will always share the basketball court with her father.

» PAGE 15



**RAINBOW FISH**

Special puppet show coming to Hylton Feb. 9.

» PAGE 18

**INTERSTATE 66**

ELLANOR C LAWRENCE PARK PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE TRAIL EXPRESS LANE EXIT RAMP EXPRESS LANE ACCESS RAMP NOISE WALLS

ELLANOR C LAWRENCE PARK EXPRESS LANE ACCESS RAMP BRADDOCK ROAD NOISE WALLS PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE TRAIL EXPRESS LANE EXIT RAMP TO MANASSAS

When completed, the new interchange at Interstate 66 and Va. Route 28 will have direct access to the HOV/toll Express Lanes.

VDOT IMAGE/PROVIDED

## No Va's Next Spaghetti Bowl

### I-66/Va. 28 interchange work to become more complicated

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Major work is continuing in Centreville to rebuild the Route 28/Interstate 66 interchange to accommodate I-66 Express Lanes as part of the Virginia Department of Transportation's \$3.7 billion Transform 66 Outside the Beltway project.

Outer portions of the I-66 bridge at Va. 28 are being demolished to allow for the addition of the express lanes, a component of the projects' overhaul of the interchanges, which VDOT officials said are on track to be completed in November. The express lanes are scheduled to open in 2022.

Along Route 28, bridge beams were installed in late January at the Poplar Tree Road Bridge, causing significant overnight detours between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. A new entrance road to E.C. Lawrence Park has also been moved from Route 28 to Stonecroft Boulevard.

Susan Shaw, VDOT's regional transportation program director for Northern Virginia, called the Route 28 interchange "one of the most complex in the corridor," and said it's so heavily-trafficked that the decision was made to give it direct access to and from the express

**Timeline on I-66/Route 28 construction:**

- » Walney Road-Braddock Road connector bridge opens | Fall 2020
- » Poplar Tree Road bridge over Route 28 opens | November 2020
- » Remaining traffic signals removed between Westfields Blvd. and Route 29 | November 2020
- » Express Lanes open | December 2022

lanes. Shaw said work in the area will intensify even more in the summer.

"We are now in the thick of construction work on the project," she said. "Drivers should be very vigilant when they're driving, as much work as you see going on out there today, it's going to continue to ramp up in the summer months."

By the end of the year, transportation officials say, all traffic signals on Route 28 between Westfields Boulevard and U.S. 29 in Centreville will be removed, and an overpass linking Braddock and Walney Roads will be complete, offering access to express and general purpose lanes. VDOT expects the new arrangement to reduce traffic flowing to I-66 from Route 28.

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## Fair makes surprising 2020 return

As fairgrounds sale advances, new organizers to host event

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Prince William area residents can look forward to at least one more year of the Prince William Fair.

The Prince William Veterans Farm Club has leased the 85-acre property for the month of August to Ahmet Aksoylu, owner of Aksoylu Properties in Manassas, according to Victor Smith, a member of the Farm Club's board of directors. The lease agreement was signed Jan. 24, Smith said.

Smith said the lease agreement stipulates that operators will manage the fair, including hiring food and entertainment vendors.

"We'll provide institutional knowledge, but it's him, it's his responsibility," Smith said.

In a statement to InsideNoVa, Aksoylu said he is excited to carry on the event. "We want to improve the fair and make it better, and more inclusive of our community's social and economic organizations," he said. "We need all the help and support we can get to do a great fair which all of our community can be proud of. We look forward to be a part of such a great tradition."

The event, to be held Aug. 14-22, will be operated by Prince William Fairgrounds LLC, said fair manager Diane Burke.

The demolition derby, garden tractor pull, monster trucks and western rodeo are among the events that will be brought back to the fair this year, she said. They are working to finalize other attractions.

"We're very excited," she said. "We hope this will be the bigger and better fair."

Burke said adult tickets will be \$12

FAIR » PAGE 3



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# Cameras, signs, service trucks coming to I-95

## \$68M in upgrades come ahead of tougher decisions on projects

» BY EMILY SIDES AND GREG HAMBRICK  
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After hearing the preliminary results from an Interstate 95 corridor study, the Commonwealth Transportation Board voted this month to allocate \$68 million for operational improvements, such as responding to accidents or other incidents and managing congestion.

Ben Mannell, the project manager for the study, which included I-95, Route 1 and Route 301, said these operational improvements have the highest return on investment and fastest implementation compared to adding more lanes. The improvements are expected to be implemented over the next three years.

The transportation board held public meetings this week to present its preliminary findings, answer questions and receive feedback. Mannell spoke to nearly 40 people Tuesday night in Lorton.

Improvements approved by the CTB include closed-circuit television cameras to help track incidents in real time, changeable message signs to alert drivers to upcoming conditions, safety service patrols, which will assist after vehicle accidents and with traffic control, towing programs and other improvements.

Staging the right towing equipment at the right places will help remove vehicles involved in a crash from the highway, Mannell said. He noted that towing tractor-trailers requires specialized equipment. Staff estimated the towing program will help clear accidents from the corridor by up to 27 minutes faster.

Around 20% of crashes are secondary crashes, and Mannell said having a safety service patrol will help reduce secondary crashes by up to 40%.

### LARGER I-95 STUDY

The changes approved by the CTB came from more than \$2.3 billion in recommended road, rail and commuter bus improvements in a preliminary study of the I-95 corridor from the North Carolina state line to the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

Mannell said VDOT will conduct a similar study of Interstate 64 this summer, before offering the CTB a list of priority projects from both studies.

Starting in fiscal year 2022, state officials are estimated to allocate about \$40 million to I-95 projects as a result of legislation approved last spring, Mannell said. And the CTB will have an additional \$4 million it can spend on any interstate in the state.

In the interim I-95 plan, study authors recommended 11 road projects in Northern Virginia that would cost up to \$748 million, including adding a shoulder lane in each direction that would be used for traffic heading in the opposite direction of the 95 Express Lanes between U.S. 17 near Fredericksburg and the Occoquan River.

The proposals include an additional \$376 million in multimodal projects, such as expanded commuter bus and train access, more park-and-ride commuter lots and enhancements and rewards for ride-sharing. VDOT notes the price tag for these multimodal ideas is far less than the \$12.5 billion cost of building a new main travel lane in Fredericksburg and Northern Virginia.

The findings also include up to \$15 million in improvements to routes such as U.S. 1 that are used as detours during incidents on I-95.

VDOT suggested dozens of additional improvements that might provide traffic relief, but would require more analysis. Those include several interchange improvements from Joplin Road to South Van Dorn Street, two-way Express Lane access, a shoulder lane for run-hour traffic in Alexandria, and more park-and-

ride lots in Prince William County.

### ALREADY IN MOTION

Over the next five years, the state is spending more than \$1 billion on roadwork in the I-95 corridor, including adding an auxiliary lane southbound from Occoquan to the Prince William Parkway, extending the I-95 Express Lanes south to U.S. 17 and adding lanes across the Rappahannock River to relieve congestion near Fredericksburg.

The \$32 million project to construct the 1.5-mile auxiliary lane on southbound I-95 from Route 123 to Prince William Parkway is currently under design, according to VDOT. The project also includes improving noise walls and repaving existing I-95 general purpose lanes.

About 90,000 vehicles travel southbound a day along that stretch, according to VDOT. Construction is slated to begin spring 2021 with an estimated completion date of late 2022.

When the project is completed, VDOT estimates travel time from the Fairfax County Parkway to the Prince William Parkway will decrease from 20 minutes to eight minutes.

In December, Gov. Ralph Northam announced \$3 billion in improvements for rail traffic along I-95 that is expected to provide new opportunities for Virginia Railway Express commuter trains. The VDOT study notes that the rail expansion program is expected to remove 5 million cars and 1 million trucks off Virginia's highways each year.

Michael McLaughlin, chief of rail transportation for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, said during the public meeting Tuesday that planned improvements include adding later morning and later night VRE trains and weekend service. In all, VRE service is expected to increase by 75% along the Fredericksburg line, he said.

FAIR » FROM PAGE 1



Rides and games will return to the midway at the Prince William Fair from Aug. 14-22. The local fair was expected to end in 2019, but new organizers have agreed to take over for 2020. PAUL LARA/FILE PHOTO

while children and seniors pay \$6 admission.

Starting on March 1, the fair will accept commercial vendor applications to advertise and promote their business at the fair, Burke said.

One stipulation of the lease agreement states that fair operators cannot apply for a liquor license, Smith said.

The Farm Club is currently negotiating the sale of the property, Smith said. While the sale has not been finalized, the board of directors decided leasing the property could bring in revenue that can help pay the property's real estate tax bill, he said. Smith said selling a property this size requires a lot of ongoing due diligence.

The Farm Club has been trying to sell the property since September 2018. Smith declined to say how much was paid for the one-month lease.

I-66 » FROM PAGE 1

At the I-66 interchange with Route 29, the ramp leading from the northbound lanes to I-66 East closed earlier this month, detouring traffic further north, where drivers are being forced to make a U-turn at Trinity Parkway to access the

interstate. That detour is expected to last about four months.

The overall scope of the project will add 22.5 miles of tolled express lanes to I-66, an extension of the express lanes added inside the beltway in 2017. The general use lanes will remain free, but the express lanes will feature a variable toll that fluctuates based on the speeds in the express lane (when speeds slow because of increased traffic, the toll increases).

Some motorists and politicians have complained that the express lanes inside the beltway are too expensive, at times spiking as high as \$46. But officials say they keep traffic flowing for those will-

ing to carpool (carpoolers can access the lanes for free) or ride buses, which also have access to the lanes.

Officials broke ground on the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway project in November of 2017, and work is scheduled to be completed by December 2022.

### PUBLIC AUCTION ONLINE February 10, 2020

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION ONLINE AT Dumfries Self Storage at Dumfries, VA, wishing to avail themselves of provisions under Virginia Self Storage Act, hereby gives advertisement of sale under said act to wit; On February 10, 2020 at 12:00pm will conduct a public auction, with PREVIEW AND BIDDING TO INITIATE ON FEBRUARY 1, 2020 AT 12PM at [www.lockerfox.com](http://www.lockerfox.com) Terms: CASH only and goods must be picked up from Dumfries Self Storage, 17625 Possum Point Rd, Dumfries, VA 22025. Sale is subject to adjournment. All units sold as is and complete.

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