

Progress Edition: Transportation projects, 2015 and 2016

BY SCOTT SHENK/THE FREE LANCE-STAR | Posted: Thursday, December 31, 2015 12:00 am

There were some big transportation changes in the Fredericksburg region in 2015, and more are on the way in the new year.

While the Interstate 95 express lanes opened in December 2014, this past year the electronically tolled lanes dominated the area's transportation headlines.

The new 29-mile express lanes stretching from North Stafford to Fairfax County have improved the commute for many, but the merge area around Route 610 in Stafford County has become a troublesome choke point.

The Virginia Department of Transportation and Transurban, the company that manages the lanes, plan to make changes officials say will help improve traffic flow in the merge area.

That work—extending and adding exit lanes—is set to start in 2016 and will take two years to complete.

Sticking with Stafford, the biggest project completed in the area in 2015 was the reconstruction of the Falmouth intersection on U.S. 1, where there are now twice as many lanes. It has improved flow through and intersection that has been a long-time traffic nightmare.

Spotsylvania County's Virginia Railway Express station opened in November, marking the first extension of the commuter rail line since it opened in 1992.

Also in Spotsylvania, VDOT expanded and redesigned the Gordon Road commuter lot, which now has more than 1,000 parking spaces.

There are some big area projects on tap for 2016, too.

Many drivers will be pleased to see the end of the widening project on U.S. 17. The good news is that the project is scheduled to be finished in 2016. The bad news? It isn't slated to be done until December.



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Passengers prepare to board the 5:57 a.m. train at Spotsylvania's new VRE station Nov. 16, the day the station opened.

When the work is finished, the stretch between McLane Drive and Stafford Lakes Parkway will be widened from four to six lanes.

Also in 2016, the intersection work at U.S. 1 and Mudd Tavern Road in Thornburg is slated to be completed, as is the bridge replacement over Mattox Creek in Westmoreland County.

Projects that are scheduled to get under way in 2016 include, of course, the express lanes merge improvement.

Work also is set to start on several intersection projects: Route 610 and Onville Road in Stafford and U.S. 1 and Harrison Road in Spotsylvania.

Another intersection project will include improvements at Courthouse Road and Smith Station Road in Spotsylvania. Work on that intersection should be finished before the end of 2016.

Rehabilitation work is set to start on the U.S. 301 bridge over the Rappahannock River at the Caroline and King George county line.

There are several other key projects on the radar for 2016. Work won't start on them, but contracts are expected to be awarded on a handful of projects:

The I-95 interchange reconstruction on Courthouse Road in Stafford.

The Courthouse Road widening project in Stafford.

Replacement of the I-95 overpass on Mudd Tavern Road and improvements to the road.