

MPO Policy Board
Online Remote Special Meeting
 Minutes, March 10, 2022

DRAFT

Video of the meeting can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6y8KIEJZFY>

VOTING MEMBERS & ALTERNATES		STAFF	
Ann Mallek, Albemarle	x	Lucinda Shannon, TJPDC	x
Ned Gallaway, Albemarle	x	Gretchen Thomas, TJPDC	x
Brian Pinkston, Charlottesville	x	Christine Jacobs, TJPDC	x
Lloyd Snook, Charlottesville	x	Sara Pennington, Rideshare	
Sean Nelson, VDOT	x	Chuck Proctor, VDOT	x
Stacy Londrey, VDOT (alternate)	x	Ryan Mickles, TJPDC	x
		Ruth Emerick, RJPDC	x
NON-VOTING MEMBERS		GUESTS/PUBLIC	
Ted Rieck, Jaunt		Winx Lawrence	x
Sandy Shackelford, TJPDC	x	Sean Tubbs	x
Julia Monteith, UVA	x	Neil Williamson	x
Garland Williams, CAT	x	Kevin McDermott	x
Wood Hudson, DRPT	x	Jessica Hersh-Ballering	x
Tristan Fessell, CTAC		Michael Barnes	x
Ryan Long, FTA		Stuart Gardner	x
		Brennan Duncan	x
		Tim Padalino	x
		Alisha Savage	x
		Allison Wrabel	x
		Annie Stafford	x
		Christopher Hays	x
		Diana Webb	x
		Fran Lawrence	x
		Greg Gelburd	x
		Alex Ikefuna	x
		Katie Whelan	x
		Lee Kondor	x
		Michael Barnes	x
		Neil Williamson	x
		Peter Krebs	x
		Katherine Knott	



Note: The Governor has declared a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the nature of this declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission to assemble in a single location. This meeting was held utilizing electronic virtual communication with the Zoom software application, and in accordance with virtual meeting procedures and policies as outlined in Item 4.0-01 of the Virginia state budget (HB29), as effective September 23, 2020. A recording of the meeting was made available to the public on March 17, 2022 at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6y8KIEJZFY>.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The MPO Policy Board Committee Chair, Ned Gallaway, presided and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Ms. Shackelford called roll to validate that a quorum was present.

2. MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC (MINUTE 2:30)

- a. **Comments by the Public:** Greg Goldberg, a physician resident of Woolen Mills since 1993, spoke in favor of the pedestrian bridge. He understands that he has some neighbors who are opposed to it but he believes the bridge is for the betterment of the community. He is a frequent user of the trails in the area and believes that building the bridge will give more people access to nature. He said that nature is one of the best prescriptions he could give somebody. He hopes that those who are thinking about their own little “castle” consider what is best for the community as a whole, which he says is to build the bridge.

Alisha Savage, resident at the corner of Chesapeake Street and Riverside, is also interested in the pedestrian bridge to create connection between the paths. She is, however, a little nervous about the parking at the Chesapeake location. At present, the park can't contain all the cars and the people that it attracts, so the parking spills into the neighboring community. This can be quite inconvenient if the residents cannot use the street parking by their houses (i.e., to unload groceries).

She said she is also nervous that expanding the parking at the park means there is no nature left, so she would vote to either have the bridge go to the Woolen Mills location because the parking is already solved there, or to not create such a concentrated pressure point for enjoyment of the river at this one location. It would also be nice if the recreation could be spread out along the river throughout the City, if possible.

Diana Webb, employee at the Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital, is in support of the bridge, with the understanding that there are pros and cons to both locations. Overall, it is a great opportunity for the community, so either option would be suitable to her.

Lee Kondor stated he is in favor of the bridge and even proposed a third alternative. He said this alternative terminates on Riverside Avenue at Bus Route 1. He said people can walk, bike or ride the bus there, so there is no need for additional parking. He hopes that the committee will consider his alternative along with the other two.

Peter Krebs, Piedmont Environmental Council, thanked the MPO Policy Board for the additional outreach being done to the public. He knows that staff and many of the committee members have visited the site and he knows that this special meeting is beyond the normal calendar for

public outreach events. He stated that either of the two options would be a huge win for the community. Both options are compelling. Both options provide connectivity, foster economic growth, and promote public health and safety while getting people out of their cars. As a bonus, they connect people to the Rivanna River without actually touching it.

A successful bridge is one that actually gets built and one that many people will use. He has heard a narrative that a popular bridge at Chesapeake Street would somehow harm the neighborhood or destroy Riverview Park. Peter installed a trail counter there years ago and he is aware of how the park usage has increased, especially since the pandemic. He sees people using the parks and enjoying nature as a positive development and one that has probably saved lives. He has seen numerous types of folks at the park and trails (parents with strollers, teens walking off their stress, elders with their companions, and friends from the neighborhood). He said it would be wonderful to offer that connection to neighboring communities and businesses.

Riverview Park has evolved since it was created and the neighborhood has benefitted from that evolution. Some of the investments have been very costly. Regardless of what happens with the bridge, the park will continue to change and this is an opportunity to address a number of things all at the same time.

He said the Wool Factory site is also a great option. There is a multi-century narrative of history and transportation that many have described with great eloquence. He said he loves what the City and County are doing there as well as on Broadway and at State Farm. Either bridge will need to be appropriate for this location and worthy of the labors and aspirations that so many have put into it.

He stated that when the committee evaluates the options, he encouraged the members to prioritize the location that brings the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people. By his analysis, that would be the Chesapeake Street location.

Lastly, he stated that he embraces this expanded outreach approach and hopes the MPO continues with it in the future.

- b. Comments provided via email, online, web site, etc.:** Mr. Gallaway noted that Lee Kondor did send in some written comments in addition to what was stated during the public comments section. The comments were received by the Policy Board and the comments will be made a part of the official record of the meeting.

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION: (MINUTE 12:10)

Review and Acceptance of the Agenda:

Sandy Shackelford said that the only change is that there is a conflict with the March 23rd meeting date listed, so that will need to be reviewed, changed and sent to the committee at a later time.

Motion/Action: Ann Mallek made a motion to accept the agenda as amended, Brian Pinkston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

4. RIVANNA RIVER BIKE/PED CROSSING ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS (MINUTE 13:26)

Sandy Shackelford reviewed the final report of the selection analysis and presented the alternatives comparison matrix. There was discussion among the members about each project.

5. ADDITIONAL MATTERS FROM THE PUBLIC: (MINUTE 1:41:12)

Annie Stafford, member of the stakeholder committee, said she has never participated in this type of process before and she said she learns something in every meeting and she just did in this one as well. She thought the MPO was the body that was going to choose the option and that the City and the County weren't going to have time to present to the public. She is curious what the next steps are.

She also wanted to advocate for the Broadway/Wool Factory access to the East Market Street bridge. She says it preserves the natural area of Riverview Park, creates another badly needed access point to the Rivanna River, is a simple solution to parking issues, does not add to the already overwhelming traffic issues in Woolen Mills, and the alignment with Broadway provides more direct and physically easier pedestrian and bike routes to downtown, not to mention the opportunities for economic development. To top it off, the owner and developer of the Wool Factory property welcomes this option.

She asked how to explain the results from the stakeholder committee. The webinar and the survey indicate a preference for the Chesapeake Street bridge. She has come to the conclusion that the charge given to the TJPDC to produce a narrowly defined study that recommends one of two bridge options wasn't broad enough for such a transformational neighborhood undertaking.

She said the stakeholders were repeatedly told that this project was going to be taken in increments and issues around parking, congestion, bridge design, etc. would all occur after the option was chosen. But if a project isn't set in a large enough framework, then the results from webinar, surveys and stakeholder meetings won't produce well-informed answers and the larger picture is lost.

She went on to say that people choose what they are familiar with and most people get to the only City park on the Rivanna River by Chesapeake Street and that almost nobody knows Broadway. She knows this because she has had the privilege of giving many tours of the two options for the bridge and always "force marched" folks through the Wool Factory parking lot and onto Broadway because she realized even early on that even most residents of Woolen Mills aren't aware that the straightforward connection exists between the river and downtown.

Chris Hayes, a local architect who has studied bridges, admittedly at an "amateur status," said he thinks a bridge in the neighborhood would be a great thing. He said when the pump station was placed at Riverview Park – across the street from him – the City said it would stay small and wouldn't smell. Unfortunately, it got bigger and there was a smell. There was a great deal of work done to create a lot of solutions within 40-50 years to reduce the smell in that neighborhood. He understands the "pros" of the Chesapeake Street option, but really it would be creating a nexus of parking there where the pump station was, which was in the natural area and potentially in the flood zone, and there is a potential of a boat ramp as part of the bridge because that is a natural follow on. A boat ramp means

more cars coming in making the parking and traffic even more dense. He asked the committee going forward to consider the history of the area and lean heavily towards the Wool Factory location.

Katie Whelan, with Bonumose, which is moving into the State Farm building, said that company makes food ingredients, so they need to meet FDA compliance measures. They weren't planning to build a fence because there wasn't a lot of foot traffic. She has seen that the trail will go by the side of the warehouse building that they are on. She requested information on how the trail is going to be from the parking lot of State Farm, that will help her decide if that will impact their food defense. Ms. Shackelford said she would send her the feasibility study.

RAI9W, who did not state his name, noted that the bridge recommended by VDOT was the standard truss bridge which would be several million dollars less expensive than either of the other two options presented. He asked why the less expensive bridge, recommended by VDOT, and already in use in Charlottesville and Albemarle, was not chosen. He also said that in the survey results, there were no responses for a standard truss bridge at either location. He said that was false because he submitted a response in the survey recommending the standard truss bridge. He wanted to know why all the results from the surveys were not included.

Mr. Gallaway explained the "next steps" process to Ms. Stafford.

Ms. Shackelford said that she would ask Metroquest why all of the comments in the surveys did not register and if they could look into that issue.

Mr. Gallaway said the comments and results are available for viewing. He also said that anyone with additional comments or who has additional questions can do so via email at sshackelford@tjpd.org.

Mr. Gallaway continued that the next meeting in March (date TBD) will have a public comment period at the beginning of the meeting, so additional comments can be made at that time.

ADJOURNMENT: Ned Gallaway adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

**Committee materials and meeting recording may be found at
<https://campo.tjpd.org/committees/policy-board/>**