

Rivanna River Bike/Ped Crossing Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

January 20th, 2022

Attendance:

Agency	Name	Attendance
VDOT	Chuck Proctor	Present
Charlottesville PW	Brennen Duncan	Absent
Albemarle Planning	Jessica Hersh-Ballering	Present
Charlottesville PR	Chris Gensic	Present
Albemarle CPR	Tim Padalino	Present
Pantops CAC	Dick Ruffin	Present
Woolen Mills Citizen	Annie Stafford	Present
Rivanna Conservation Alliance	Lisa Wittenborn	Present
Regional Transit Partnership	Bea LaPisto-Kirtley	Absent
Charlottesville Planning Commission	Karim Habbab	Present
Albemarle Planning Commission	Daniel Bailey	Absent
Rivanna Trails Foundation	Fran Lawrence	Present
CTAC	Stuart Gardner	Present
RSWA	Andrea Bowles	Present
Piedmont Environmental Council	Peter Krebs	Present
	Christopher Hays	Present
	Dan Mahon	Present
	Sara Dexter	Present
	Bill Emory	Present
	Kevin McDermott	Present
	Brian Roy	Present
	Ethan Tate	Present
	Shane Sawyer	Present
	Diana Webb	Present
	Allison Ewing	Present

1. Welcome – Sandy Shackelford
2. Attendance
3. Site Visit Debrief
4. Discussions of Factors for Consideration
5. Additional Public Outreach

This meeting began with a welcome and thanks to stakeholders and public for continued involvement and interest in this project.

Site Meeting Debrief: There was an onsite meeting held on January 14th with good turnout and discussion. During the onsite meeting, a new bridge alignment for Broadway Street was proposed. However, it is similar to an alignment that was already eliminated following the feasibility study for a

number of technical reasons. At this point in the process there is not enough time or resources to assess another bridge alignment. The two that we will be moving forward with discussing are the Chesapeake and E market Street options. Some concerns were raised about existing traffic congestion on East Market Street.

- Peter Krebs made a comment in the chat that getting to either option, esp Option 2, via Broadway is definitely still feasible due to proximity and that the main business of the meeting is to pick a bridge location.
- Tim Paladino: Broadway option is a great opportunity to connect downtown and the River. Broader connectivity and network questions do not need to drive an 8-figure infrastructure investment, because all of the options are within a very small area. The bridge will predominantly be used by bikers and those trying to access the Old Mills or Rivanna River Trail. The bridge locations and larger connectivity of the area should be thought of separately as networking options.
- Bill Emory: As a Market Street resident I would very much welcome more bicyclists and pedestrians on Market. Bikes and pedestrians calm vehicular traffic.
- Sara Dexter: As a neighbor from Chesapeake who walks on East Market 1-2 times a day, I see how cars regularly access the WF via E Market—they ignore signage, they speed, and it’s a menace to walkers and bikers. Riverview Park is overwhelmed with cars. So, it is a huge concern to me that parking and vehicular traffic isn’t going to be tied to this plan! It is not right to appease neighbors’ concerns with a “we’ll deal with it later”. This is currently not working well for East Market residents.
- Annie Stafford: In Albemarle County’s economic development study, they include a blue print for Broadway, and are very interested in revitalizing that area and increasing connectivity. Seems like a logical way to incorporate the community to the Rivanna and open things up so that not all river traffic is funneled into Riverview Park. It would be great to spread area traffic so that things are opened up a little bit more to attract people to different areas of the park.
- Kevin McDermott: Worked on the Broadway blueprint and with Brian on the development of the site there. A diversity of access points along Broadway and the river is definitely one they want to enhance, making the connection between the Rivanna Trail on both sides by Riverview Park and Moore’s creek and to build the Broadway corridor up to open up as many options for those access points as possible.
- Chris Gensic: The application should include features that the grant could support, there may be a few things we can do between the landing and the old power plant and mill building. Maybe we include language, in case it is a possibility to do things beyond this particular bridge project.
- It was clarified that the parking spots of the Wool Factory are available for parking regardless of the bridge alignment that is chosen for the application.

Resiliency, Sustainability, and Environmental Impacts:

Concerns were raised about the small clearance of the East Market Street Option over the 100-year floodplain as well as the nature of the “sediment island.”

- Chris Gensic relayed that the sediment island is a geologic formation that has been there for quite a long time and is unlikely to erode anytime soon.
- From VDOT feasibility study (by VHB): The Riverview Park location would "have a vertical clearance of nearly 40 feet over normal river height and fifteen feet over the 100-year floodplain at 324 feet." The Moore's Creek/Woolen Mills location would be "25 feet above the normal water level and one [1] foot above the 100-year flood zone"
- VDOT reinforced that extensive geologic study and work would be done to ensure the stability of the piers as well as protect the bridge from any high-water events. Chuck Proctor stated that the Chesapeake bridge option is actually within the floodplain because Chesapeake Street and the intersection, where the bridge would connect, is within the floodplain.
- Clarification on whether the Woolen Mills option is within the floodway or not is needed.
- The technical memo expresses that there will likely be more floodway impacts from the E market street alignment.
- It was asked whether the flood maps for the area have been updated recently and Brian Roy confirmed they were.

Concerns and questions regarding the erosion of the banks surrounding the river and the river bottom were addressed. While neither of the proposed designs have piers within the water, deeper pier foundations and riprap are potential solutions, and evaluations will be done by VDOT during the build to develop appropriate measures to avoid erosion.

- Would the banks need to be hardened with some type of material?
- Would the piers themselves erode?
- VDOT will conduct a hydraulic assessment to see how the structures we are putting in will affect the surrounding area if the project moves forward. Called an H&H study.
- RCA asked, during a flood event the piers at Chesapeake would likely be inundated with water, will potential flooding impacts be assessed?
- Do we know how close to the bank piers would be for this option? That level of evaluation has not been done yet. The wastewater interceptor would also need to be engineered around and considered before specific engineering designs are developed.

Another environmental concern will be the impact to traffic in this area. Communities where the bridges terminate can disrupt quality of life for residents there.

- Can we estimate how these bridges may affect traffic near the bridge options? It is predicted that this bridge will not cause increased traffic, but there is no way to know at this point.

ADA accessibility:

Questions were raised regarding altering the bridge height. Bridge heights were determined to meet ADA requirements by having slopes less than 5%. VDOT clarified that raising the bridge height could present an obstacle on the west side of the river (Riverview side) for both options if raised due to changes in the tie down points. ADA accessibility requirements must be met for the bridge to move forward. E market street alignment shown currently does not meet ADA accessibility requirements, but it would have to be once implemented. The Chesapeake Street option presents less obstacles in the way of meeting ADA requirements.

Transit Access:

The closest transit access are currently midway down Riverview Drive and mid-block down Chesapeake Street.

There is a transit stop at Martha Jefferson and State Farm Property on the Pantops side.

A comment was made that transit access is proposed to be expanded in the blueprint for Broadway that could enhance overall network connectivity.

Water, Safety, and Recreational Use:

Neither of the bridge designs currently have piers that are within the waterway. For the East Market Street alignment, potential construction on the island in the river may create a temporary obstacle. Additionally, safety requirements will be met or exceeded for barriers and rails along the bridge. The idea has been proposed to add a boat ramp to the application which would improve water access.

Questions and Comments regarding the boat ramp:

- What are the extents of driveway and parking for a proposed boat launch? That sounds like a large amount of hardscape.
- The feasibility study didn't provide site plan-level design details, but it will be important for a (potential) bridge in either location to be designed with sustainability, resiliency, and context-sensitivity in mind.
- A suggestion that boat access could be explored by working on the embankment at Riverview Park.
- Allison Ewing: You said parking has been looked at relative to Riverview Park. Can you explain where and how much? Also, while this is a discussion on the bridge, I am alarmed at the boat launch discussions in tandem. Does this mean a drop off drive, expanded parking for trailers, etc? Or just an improved structure?

Both would have equivalent impact to water recreation during construction.

After periods of flooding or due to river flow over time debris may need to be removed either by city or county staff to avoid threatening the integrity of the bridge.

Many concerns were raised about an increased need for parking due to this attraction in the area.

- Residents at East Market Street expressed that parking is increasingly inadequate and on a busy day and cars are up and down the streets and parking on their lawns. What we really don't want though is an even bigger parking lot bringing more traffic through our neighborhood streets to a park that is already beyond capacity as natural habitat. This small park can only take so much activity and two new attractions will kill what is so appealing about a natural area within the city limits.
- We in the neighborhood are concerned that no studies have been conducted to assess the impacts of the pedestrian bridge. No traffic studies, no studies on parking, no larger masterplan in place.
- Another community member stated that there was no parking available anywhere near Riverview in the summer, but the Woolen Mills parking lot has availability. Seems like there is a

huge downside to being wrong about parking @ Riverview and much less of a downside on being wrong about parking @ Woolen Mills.

- Others suggested that the proximity of both options to the Woolen Mills parking lot will allow for it to be utilized regardless.
- Parking on the county side/Pantops side has the potential to reduce parking needs on the park side.

Further summary of public impacts will be assessed and discussed in the following meeting in February.

Utility Impacts: Wastewater interceptor could impact the Chesapeake Street landing. Abutment design would need to ensure that wastewater interceptor is avoided.

Project Cost: Any unknowns will be factored into the project costs, as well as inflation costs over the course of the next few years before the project is implemented. Projects that score best based on cost differentiation and must be considered. The variables impacting cost for each option are potentially more right of way impacts for Chesapeake Street option, while the Market Street bridge would be longer. The type of bridge built can drive up the cost of the project. Cable-stay and vertical truss bridges are proposed. A more conventional bridge could be cheaper. Once we know which bridge alignment we want, then we can specifically discuss which design would be implemented and specific cost related to that design.

Because the Rivanna is designated as a scenic river, RCA wants to ensure visual impact is minimal.

The design process will need to have lots of community involvement to get a bridge that is worthy of its location.

Someone asked if a cable stay bridge could work for Market Street bridge. In order for this to function, the bend in the current design of the bridge would have to be removed.

Outreach and Engagement: A draft of a public survey will be sent out for review and additions made by the bridge stakeholders. The purpose of the survey will be to gauge support of both bridge options and the reasons for support of each alignment and location.

Further Comments:

Karim Habbab expressed support for the Chesapeake Bridge option due to lower cost, less maintenance requirements over time, higher elevation, resiliency, accessibility with a better chance to meet ADA requirements, continuous sidewalk already located up the street. Additionally, it creates a nice loop between the Old Mills and Rivanna trail, and could reduce parking currently at Riverview park due to better River Access on Pantops. Equity wise it is more visible and part of the public realm. Environmentally, nothing needs to be lugged to a non-sediment island.

Peter discussed creating a blog post to discuss public engagement and the potential bridge development. His email is: pkrebs@pecva.org He also provided an iterated map of the options and asked if anything had been left out.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/10sqqs2knh01zLr_oqvVP2oFc0dzf2DSx/view?usp=sharing

Comments were made on Riverview Parks intended usage at its conception, and its original goal was to be a natural area with no field, courts, toilets or development. More recently usage has shifted to more

recreational uses with a significant increase in biking, boating, in addition to hikers and bikers. This is a fundamental shift to what the purpose of Riverview Park is.

Another community member made comments about overflowing nature of Riverview Park parking lot during summer months. More opportunities should be explored to share parking overflow to Pantops side.

City and county staff are aware of parking and Riverview Park concerns and want to make any changes while being harmonious with community goals for the river and area. Any impact to Riverview Park will be assessed and mitigated based on community needs. Additionally, parking at periphery access points is being explored as well to allow for those to enjoy the river without ruining it. This was something that was focused on during the Rivanna River Urban Corridor Plan and if this Smart Scale application moves forward, service parking lots will be identified at a conceptual level. If we can provide parking in periphery points, that could help address the issues that exist.

The next meeting will be held February 17th at 4 pm. Sandy Shackelford thanked everyone for their continued involvement and concern.

Meeting Close: 5:26 PM