

Rivanna River Bike/Ped Crossing Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting

December 16th, 2021

Agency	Name	Attendance
VDOT	Chuck Proctor	Present
Charlottesville PW	Brennen Duncan	Present
Albemarle Planning	Jessica Hersh-Ballering	Present
Charlottesville PR	Chris Gensic	Present
Albemarle PR	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	Present
Charlottesville Planning Commission	Karim Habbab	Present
Albemarle Planning Commission	Daniel Bailey	Absent
Rivanna Trails Foundation	Fran Lawrence	Present
CTAC	Stuart Gardner	Absent

1. Welcome – Sandy Shackelford
2. Attendance (additional attendees):
 - R Morr
 - Bill Emory
 - Shane Sawyer, VDOT
 - Peter Krebs
 - Jon Bolecek
 - Gabe Silver
 - Robin Hanes
3. SMART SCALE Scoring Overview

Sandy Shackelford introduced new members to the group.

She also clarified that the projects were identified through a comprehensive planning process. There was a feasibility study last year to see if this would be a viable project. Each project is scored and evaluated against other projects in competition for funding.

It is scored on safety, congestion mitigation, accessibility, environmental quality, economic development, and land use coordination.

This project will be competing for state funding. One of the goals is to create an application based on the factors that VDOT is considering and trying to keep the costs down. How to facilitate a bridge across the river knowing that we won't be able to do everything at one time. It will have to be done in incremental steps to keep costs down from year to year to be competitive for SMART SCALE scoring.

Ms. LaPisto-Kirtley asked about VDOT's standards.

Mr. Proctor said it takes into consideration how many people will be using the bridge and how many vehicles it will take off the road. Regarding safety, this bridge provides an actual safe way to cross the river, where there is none now. VDOT will look at the impact on transportation as a whole in the area.

John Bolecek said he thinks the project has a chance to score well on the economic development scale, too. Additionally, the project will get a good land use score. There will also be a higher accessibility score. The risk is always cost.

Annie Stafford said she does not see where this establishes an unmet need to cross the river. It has been talked about as a commuter transportation bridge, but she does not see it as a commuter bridge, more a recreation bridge. She doesn't think this will relieve traffic congestion. She doesn't know where the data is for that.

John Bolecek said a project does not have to score in every category to get funding. It is more competitive if you can score on all of them, but the top scoring project get the most money. He says it is reasonable to assume that people will be using this bridge for both commuter and recreation purposes.

Ms. Stafford said that assumptions are not data.

Chuck Proctor said that modeling can be done to project future demand for the facility to be there.

Peter Krebs noted this project is appealing in part because it's close to Sentara Martha Jefferson, State Farm Site, Wool Factory, Broadway Blueprint area.

Karim Habbab said it would be helpful if there was a diagram re: what people would be going for.

4. Discussions of Factors for Consideration

Sandy Shackelford showed three alignments for consideration.

She also shared prioritization of factors to consider:

- Parking Concerns, specifically around Riverview Park. Parking shortage at Riverview Park currently exists. Commuter use of the bridge not likely to increase parking demand. Old Mills Trail could become a larger recreational attraction as it is extended/as access improves. Options to increase/manage parking in the general area can be explored as part of/in addition to this project. Woolen Mills development has 10 dedicated parking spaces for recreational users; currently no clear opportunities to expand parking near The Wool Factory.
 - o Mr. Lawrence said we should explore additional parking with Mr. Roy.
 - o Mr. Habbab asked if there is a potential bus loop to Woolen Mills. Bill Emory said a bus used to run to the Mill, started in 1951, was ended about 8 years ago. Mr. Habbab wondered if that could change, especially now that there is more attraction there.

- Ms. Stafford said they have been assured that it was not going to become a parking lot.
 - Mr. Ruffin asked for clarification for the parking spaces. There was some confusion about where the 10 spots were located.
 - Mr. Emory said having inadequate parking is good, it forces mode changes, how one chooses to get to a place. He also said the Planning Commission deliberately underparked Honesty Park.
 - Mr. Krebs noted that Sandy was correct--the dedicated spaces are by the Moore's Creek bridge. Either way, they are close.
 - Robin Hanes asked how many parking spaces are projected to be needed.
 - Gabe Silver said he thinks the bridge is a great concept and catching up with a lot of other area that have resources like this. He hopes that a trailhead parking lot will accompany this. There should be considered river access in the planning as well.
 - Fran Lawrence said the Broadway option is the least disruptive and would like to see it bumped up to the top choice on the list.
 - Bill Emory said this would be a transformational project for the neighborhood. He sees this as a way to improve the area with the best bridge possible.
- Sandy showed connectivity considerations on Chesapeake Street, E. Market Street, and Broadway Street.

Chris Gensic said these will be used in several different ways by several different types of users and safety needs to be considered.

There was a discussion on how to access the bridge.

Chris Gensic asked for there to be a poll done on where the committee lands on the bridge crossing.

Ms. Shackelford asked the committee if the Riverside Avenue alignment should be kept on the table for consideration at this time. She discussed the pros and cons. It was the consensus to remove that option.

The next meeting will be January 20th at 4:00 p.m.

Public comment:

Peter Krebs said he appreciates the group and the work it is doing. He posted two links in the chat

This map takes the VDOT feasibility study and gives some context:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BGxmlHyh3yLct8_VSeilikdu0ybDydBV/view

Peter created this doc that lays out the issues for all 3 options, please take a look and send/add your comments. A decision can be easier if all the issues are laid out in one place.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jXrMb2L7dBfEyndFAiDluR3sQVQ06NIYemeowzLYUxw/edit?usp=sharing>

5. Public Outreach Strategies

Ms. Shackelford asked “What questions should we be asking the public?” and “What are the potential ways to get input from the public?”

Karim said if we are making this an accessible bridge, is there an accessible path to get to the bridge. Also, we need to consider who will be using this bridge and keep it equitable.

Ms. Stafford asked about the steps for submitting the proposal. Ms. Shackelford said there needs to be a public workshop in March of 2022 and the pre-applications are due in May of 2022. August 1 is the deadline for application submission.

Mr. Proctor reported that funding wouldn’t be available until 2025. 2029 or 2030 would probably be when the project is completed.

There was a discussion about taking a field trip to an onsite visit.

The meeting ended at 5:22 p.m.