

RECONNECT JACKSON WARD



Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

Identifying solutions for improving access between north and south Jackson Ward.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the City of Richmond, has undertaken a feasibility study to identify opportunities to reconnect Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods, a historic African American community that has been physically and economically separated by Interstates 95 and 64 since the 1950s.

The feasibility study began in January 2022 and included public information meetings, pop-up events and focus groups, providing the public with an opportunity to help guide the decision-making process and ensure the project responds to the needs of the community.

The feasibility study has identified that it would be technically possible to implement a new bridge or cap structure within the study area; however, careful continued community engagement and additional studies and analyses will be needed to advance the successful implementation of the project. These future efforts will be informed by important thematic design elements and recommendations identified in the feasibility study report.



Given the complexities of the constrained urban project location, construction costs for a reconnection could be considerable. The City of Richmond, along with state and regional partners, are identifying opportunities for financing and implementation. The Reconnecting Communities Discretionary Grant Program provides an opportunity for the City to receive financial support in continuing project implementation. The City intends to apply for a planning grant to continue to advance this project.

PROJECT LOCATION

The study area generally encompasses Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods and has focused on the evaluation of improvements between the Belvidere Street Bridge over I-95 to the North 1st Street Bridge over I-95.

FRAMEWORK DESIGN PLAN

Through the public engagement process, the community identified conceptual themes and amenities to be included in the conceptual project plan. Four themes were selected to capture Jackson Ward's community vision as it reflects on its past, present, and future as a way of commemorating and reviving black excellence and ownership in Jackson Ward and other displaced neighborhoods.

PRIMARY FRAMEWORK THEMES

Mixed Use – Commerce/Housing

- Reestablish the historic neighborhood and opportunities for marketplaces, commerce, and innovation.
- Prioritize Black wealth creation by creating home, business, and land ownership opportunities.



Faith & Contemplative Space

- Reconnect Jackson Ward with paths that encourage cultural growth and discovery and provide a space for the community that encourages personal growth and development.



Youth Engagement Space

- Build and promote excellence and opportunities in Jackson Ward for youth and personal engagement.
- Provide youth with a space for recreation and leisure.

Arts & Entertainment Space

- Integrate arts and entertainment spaces that celebrate the history and culture of Jackson Ward and provide a space for community events and entertainment.



NEXT STEPS

Working with OIPI and VDOT, the City of Richmond will be continuing to engage the public and work to advance the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. The City is currently pursuing a planning grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to seek funding to develop a refined plan for reconnecting Jackson Ward.

The goal of the additional planning activities is to design a project that is fiscally feasible and will reconnect the community. Planning activities funded by the planning grant are anticipated to include:

Additional Studies and Analyses

- Traffic evaluations and additional analyses
- Environmental reviews required for federally-funded construction projects

Preliminary Engineering and Design

- Utilizing designers with experience designing Black spaces

Local History and Culture Archival Research

- To inform community sensitive design as well as impact analyses

Philanthropic Coordination

- Identifying support and partners dedicated to the creation and establishment of an organization/foundation

Continued Community Engagement