



MEETING SUMMARY

Date: Thursday, March 23, 2022

Time of Meeting: 4:00 – 5:30 PM

Subject: Steering Committee Meeting #3

Project: Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

Project UPC: 114874

Contract Number: 49401-009

MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee		
Adam Bond	Ebenezer Baptist Church	adam.bond@ebenezerrva.org
Aria Kirkland-Harris	Ebenezer Baptist Church	aria.kirkland-harris@ebenezerrva.org
Billy McMullen	Community Member	billymacspeaks@gmail.com
Charlene Pitchford	Gilpin Court Tenants Council	crprhatenantcommissioner@gmail.com
David Lambert	Eye Que Optical	eyequeoptical@gmail.com
Desi Wynter	Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority	desi.wynter@rrha.com
Donté McCutchen	Moriah Baptist Church	donte.mccutchen@gmail.com
Janis Allen	Historic Jackson Ward Civic Association	janisaa55@yahoo.com
Jerome Legions	Carver Area Civic League	jeromelegions1@gmail.com
Jim Hill	Carver Area Civic League	jaschrhill@gmail.com
Leighton Powell	Community Member	leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org
Marland Buckner	The Black History Museum	mbuckner@mbsq.net
Max Hepp-Buchanan	Venture Richmond	mhbuchanan@venturerichmond.com
Mecca Harris	ART 180	mecca@art180.org
Nate Goodenow	Walter Parks	nate@wparks.com
Ron Stallings	Hippodrome	rastallings@walkerrow.com
Zarina Fazaldin	Z&L Historic LLC	landzhistoric@msn.com
Office of the Secretary of Transportation – Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment		
Ronique Day	Deputy Director	ronique.day@oipi.virginia.gov
Virginia Department of Transportation		
Ben Mannell	TMPD Assist. Division Administrator	ben.mannell@vdot.virginia.gov
City of Richmond		
Maritza Pechin	PDR-OED Deputy Director	maritza.pechin@rva.gov
Dironna Clarke	DPW-OETM Administrator	dironna.clarke@rva.gov
Yessenia Revilla	PDR-OED Planner	yessenia.revilla@rva.gov
DeAndrae Spradley	Planner	deandrae.spradley@rva.gov
Kelli Rowan	Program Manger	kelli.rowan@rva.gov

MEETING ATTENDEES (CONT.):

Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP		
Caleb Parks	Project Manager	cparks@wrallp.com
Ebony Walden Consulting/Storefront for Community Design		
Ebony Walden	Community Engagement and Coordination	ebony@ebonywalden.com
Shawn Balon	Community Engagement and Coordination	shawn@storefrontrichmond.org
OnPoint Transportation Public Relations		
Mike Carosi	Community Engagement and Coordination	mike@communicateonpoint.com
Windy Campbell	Community Engagement and Coordination	Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com
Rummel, Klepper and Kahl, LLP (RK&K)		
Stuart Samberg	I-95/Belvidere Interchange STARS Study	mike@communicateonpoint.com

Note: A list of additional attendees is enclosed with this meeting summary

1. Introductions/Icebreaker

- After reviewing the meeting agenda Steering Committee Members introduced themselves, their affiliation, and were asked what excites them about the Reconnect Jackson Ward study.
 - Attendance taken
 - Update was given on community event scheduled for beginning of month – overview of museum interactive stations – 7 stations – focus on benefits and input on possible locations to consider and feedback on program elements to consider
 - Feedback heard – under 100 attendees – 1st station – reconnect means – Station – parks and open space – paths and bicycle pedestrian – cultural entertainment
 - Where in project corridor to see connection
 - 6th Mount Zion
 - Pop up events summary – March 3rd community event – share survey and spread awareness

- **Digital Poll Questions Part 1:** Word or phrase use to highlight Community Event or your involvement with the RJW Feasibility Study so far? (Open ended)

What is a word or phrase that you would use to highlight Community Event or your involvement with the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study so far?
Inspirational!
Good discussion around the location of the connection
inclusive
Interesting
engaged
Collaborative
interest, engaging, personal stories
impactful
Inconclusive

2. Study Updates

- A summary of the March 24, 2022, Steering Committee meeting was provided including:
 - Results of the polling questions
 - Review of the study scope
- Public survey – closes March 31, 2022
 - Over 250 respondents – hard copy or online
 - Link in chat to survey – sent out after meeting too
- Public survey summary – only 40 total live in GP, carver and JW, people in these areas should be targeted for summary.

Q (Anedra Bourne): Slide of proposed locations for potential connection – Has there been discussion of utilizing existing cross of interstate or rehabbing that structure?

A (Caleb Parks): *Yes, however, conditions within each area are different. Area F includes an existing 1st street crossing. Based on public feedback and what to prioritize, the type of connection needed, and the existing street system, each area is different.*

Q (Anedra Bourne): The existing bridge may or may not be open, but it is not being utilized, a secondary bridge is.

A (Caleb Parks): *The existing facility could offer additional option, but current traffic situation must be taken into account. The primary directive of the project is to create new connection.*

(Ebony Walden): For areas E to F, how the existing facility is utilized is based on the elements of the connection that people want. Look at these elements and then consider expand existing or have connection elsewhere.

- Public Survey Summary – summary of responses to date – incorporate into existing facilities – park or open space (necessitates expansion of facility or new facility)

(Ben Mannell): locations slide – Due to overhang difficulties, the first street bridge rehabilitation project, which is presently part of a design-build contract, is moving forward. It will replace the existing bridge in kind and provide amenities.

Q (Michael Hallmark): My question is on the width of the connection. These areas all look to be a block wide. Is there a built in limitation to overall width, cost, etc.? Having a connection of sufficient area (width) is critical to separating this concept from simply being a wide 'bridge' to being an area that can provide real community cohesion.

A *How to maintain existing facilities*

Responses were even across board for connection; however, areas C and D are slightly more preferred than other areas. What are potential new connections and the benefits/drawbacks of them?

Q (Leighton Powell): Gilpin Court is a part of Jackson Ward and should be referred to as such.

A (Ebony Walden): *Specific engagement from the Gilpin Court community is necessary. Responses were separated to see the location of the resident. Wording is highly sensitive and impacts how and who responds.*

Q (Leighton Powell): Separate into Jackson Ward North and Jackson Ward South

Q (Janis Allen): Where are the boundaries for Jackson Ward North and Jackson Ward South

A (Maritza Pechin): *Consideration is necessary of the differences between Jackson Ward North and Jackson Ward South and what specific outreach or strategies are best for each location.*

Q (Donte McCutchen): Specific residents lie outside of the Gilpin Ct area but should still be considered in outreach, i.e., persons north of 95, non-public housing residents, and residents not in the N JW and Gilpin Ct housing development.

A (Ebony Walden): *The boundaries can change to north of interstate / north JW to incorporate people not currently included.*

- Public survey summary – summary of responses to date – Q3 and Q4 –

(Caleb Parks): Evaluation methods used to identify wanted connections or concepts. These concepts and connections should be kept in mind with evaluation measures and internal considerations to evaluate effectiveness of concepts for possible benefits.

- 1 – reconnect history and place –
- Rank higher on survey responses –
- Providing a percentage point – rough sketch of area D – directly adjacent to church – top contender for public input – establish walkable area within ¼ mile for concepts
- Measure – minimize existing grade and new facility
- Mobility – How do we incorporate existing facilities and new connections? What are the limitations and options for current connections to be improved and new connections built?

Q (Kelli Rowan): A lot of the connectivity between these locations is proximity based. An option that exists is the accessibility tool (PlanRVA) that gives relevancy to where those residents are trying to get to? How have we measured accessibility so far?

A (Caleb Parks): *This information can be analyzed using streetlight data, which provides cell phone tracking information about walking patterns of residents to determine current accessibility and patterns.*

Q (Kelli Rowan): How do current O/D pairs create circuitries? PlanRVA and RVA use the accessibility tool for project prioritization.

A (Caleb Parks): *We can look into the accessibility tools to see how to incorporate them into this project.*

Q (Janis Allen): Did people sign in and identify where they lived at the beginning of the meeting?

A (Caleb Parks): *Sign in was included but not with resident location.*

(Ebony Walden): *For next time, we should put a check box on the sign in sheet for people to include if they live in Jackson Ward, Gilpin Ct, or other Richmond areas.*

Q (Janis Allen): How do we increase the public response to the surveys? What are ways to encourage more people to take the survey?

A (*Caleb Parks/Shawn Balon*): 25 to 30 people attended the event and took the survey, as well as a link, to share with family and friends. Survey should be shared with neighbors, family, friends, etc. to increase responses.

(*Ebony Walden*): Try to encourage the public to share with 10 people they know, people are more likely to respond to the survey if they know a friend or loved one is the one who sent it to them.

Q (*Anedra Bourne*): Are there means to have the neighborhood associations send a text link to different audiences who may not own a computer and might instead do it from their phones?

A (*Shawn Balon*): Community ambassadors are passing out flyers, giving them the opportunity to run into anyone and provide them with a link to the survey. Charlene has been doing survey with residents with the goal of getting paper copies to residents to increase survey response.

Q (*Michael Hallmark*): What is the size of the option area based on? Funding? Etc.? How is that included in the formula?

A (*Caleb Parks*): It is based on established structural areas incorporating existing street network and comparing to historic street network. For the areas that are within each block, the idea is to look to identify developable areas from structure standpoint as well as a monetary standpoint.

Q (*Michael Hallmark*): Could the area be 3 to four blocks wide, or include multiple areas, such as B through E? How do we ensure that this project is large enough to not be just creating a connection between north and south but give them an area to reconnect?

A (*Maritza Pechin*): It is not limited to a block but is going to be the whole area. Factors taken into consideration are what makes the most sense given current constraints, what is best for the community, and what does the community value.

Q (*Michael Hallmark*): opportunity to send side email – catch up on side email – look at precedents out there

A (*Caleb Parks*): Where is the most interest, where does the community most want to see a connection? How could this be developed through a block connection or with several blocks? Cost and constraints to height and clearance must be considered.

(*Stuart Samberg*) Provided an overview of the 95/64 Belvidere improvements study. Current issue of weaving and aggressive driving

- Noticeable improvements in peak period
- Additional connection

Q (*Anedra Bourne*): How does the Belvidere study impact other future transportation projects?

A (*Ben Mannell*): In order to evaluate future renovations and enhancements, the Belvidere study examines the intersection of Belvidere 95 and 64. desired financing from CVTA or Smart Scale; regional gas tax; several communities represented; imposed regional gas tax; locally generated; applied to transportation projects; priority list of projects being established; Belvidere study; funding for that; proposed as SS - to compete for state financing as well - the

same could be said for RJW - grant pot of monies - intended for reuniting communities - chance to get money from state, federal, and local sources. The best course of action is to look at a combination of funds to have the best leverage. This has before been used to CVTA for consideration, can be submitted under Smart Scale, better success in obtaining federal grants and increased local or state financing.

(Maritza Pechin): The Master Plan included an idea from Jackson Ward, but most people spoke without regard to the master plan, according to Dironna, chair of CVTA's financial department. We must comprehend from a physical standpoint what this reconnecting signifies. What different possibilities and scenarios are there for low, middle, and high costs? Having a project to apply for and something to apply with in terms of infrastructure; the ideas are considerably further along; this procedure is to move us closer to receiving the cash \$ - huge.

Q (Jerome Legions): Is it taking (Belvidere St) consideration south side of leigh st is narrow – what is considered from exit from interstate – a lot of more traffic onto leigh st –

A (Caleb Parks): *Follow up on transportation analysis to answer questions – Stuart – Will send presentation to Caleb and answer questions.*

(Ebony Walden): For the next public meeting, we will be presenting ideas on how to move forward. In addition, a product update on evaluations and strategies should be available for the public. The survey should again be shared with the attendees of the meeting and encouraged to share it with family and friends.

- *Date of events*
- *Caleb follow up with invites – meet on 21st April – roll out concepts and community event*