

Richmond Connects Engagement Phase 2

EAST END FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

January 19, 2023 | 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm | Neighborhood Resource Center

Participants

Maleeka Whaker, Fulton Hill
Aquanetta Scott, Mosby
Kharizma Owens, Whitcomb
Grace Albritton, Peter Paul
Gillian Cubbage, Chimborazo
Marnae Smith, 30th St.
Tarshell Johnson, Mosby Court
Mary Higdon, Mosby Court
Chris Francis

Sharondi Cosby
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Richmond Connects Team

Chenice Brown, OETM
Jessica Dimmick, EPR
Kelli Rowan, OETM
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FOCUS GROUP PURPOSE

As part of Phase 2 of the community engagement for Richmond Connects, three focus group sessions were held in January and February 2023 to share the weighted needs maps with people who live in or represent one or more communities of concern. Community members reviewed the needs maps and provided feedback on what makes sense and what is missing.

The participants in this focus group reside in communities of concern areas in Richmond's East End. The group discussed the needs maps for the entire City of Richmond. Many comments pertain specifically to the East End, and other areas of the City were discussed as well.

Review of Needs Maps

The Richmond Connects team shared the weighted needs maps for five of the eleven Investment Need Categories established by Path to Equity, including:

- Bicycle (INC 1a)
- Pedestrian (INC 1b)
- Transit (INC 2)
- Safety/Security (INC 5)
- Maintenance (INC 7)

These maps represent the weighted needs from the analysis of data, but do not yet reflect public input.

Each of the weighted needs maps included a scale from low to high need. Participants viewed each map and reflected on their experiences. Facilitators asked participants to identify 1-3 things that made sense on the maps and 1-3 things they felt were missing from the maps.



Key Themes

Transit needs talked about a lack of reliability in the bus system, a lack of connectivity to certain areas, bus stops lacking amenities like shelters and benches, and a lack of frequency, notably to and from the East End. Maintenance comments mostly revolved around certain roads that needed sidewalk improvements. Pedestrian comments discussed certain intersections and roads that needed additional pedestrian crossing improvements and areas that need sidewalks. Bike comments included existing bike lanes that need enhanced protection, streets that need new bike infrastructure, and a lack of bike infrastructure connectivity. Lastly, the safety comments mostly discussed pedestrian crossings, safe bus stops, and traffic calming infrastructure along certain streets.

The tables below show the items identified in this exercise. Comments in black text were written on sticky notes. **Comments in blue text describe the location of dots indicating agreement or disagreement with the maps.**

Participants often noted needs and voiced opinions about what should be done irrespective of the needs map. These comments were captured and often included in the Missing column.

Bicycle Needs (INC 1a) Results

Makes Sense	Missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Franklin St at 19th St is low need• Oliver Hill Way between Leigh St viaduct and Fairfield Way is high need• Area of Fulton Hill between Montgomery St and Waverly St north of Carlisle Ave is high need• Area near Winchell St and Campbell Ave is moderate/high need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add bike lanes on Hospital St and 7th St• Bike lanes on 25th St from Main & 25th all the way to Nine Mile• Cars are constantly parked in the bike lanes in front of MLK Middle, and cars consistently use the bike lane on the Leigh St Viaduct to skip traffic• Bike and car conflicts at Leigh St viaduct and Mosby St• Williamsburg Rd, Nine Mile Rd, Fairmount Ave, and 25th St need bike lanes• Only two blocks of bike lanes on Mosby between P St & R St - doesn't connect to anything and not safe• The floating parking next to the bike lanes doesn't make them safer (Franklin St & 1st St)• The existing bike lane network between the East End and Downtown doesn't connect to itself• There are bike lanes on the Leigh St Viaduct, 9th St, Lee Bridge, but no lanes on either side of the bridges• Northside - Brook Rd bike lanes lessen car accessibility• Bike lanes should be wider for rider safety (in general)• Williamsburg Rd needs official bike lane from Northampton St to Randall Ave (Laburnum Ave towards Henrico)• 25th St between Clay St and County Rd needs to be higher need• Venable St between 25th St and Mosby St needs to be higher need• Peter Paul neighborhood (dot placed at W St and 23rd St) should be higher need• Fairfield Court (dots placed at 25th St and Selden St and on Phaup St between 23rd St and 25th St) should be higher need• No bike lanes on Cool Ln• Kemp Ave at Farrand St (dot placed indicating disagreement with map, but this area is outside city limits)• Eanes Ln between Shirleydale Ave and Wendell Dr (dot placed indicating disagreement with map, but this area is outside city limits)• Extend and connect existing bike lanes – Government Rd, Leigh St, on both sides of the Viaduct from Boulevard all the way through Glenwood Ave to connect with Government. Sharrows are not bike lanes• Extend 1st Street bike lane to connect with Franklin or add a transition from 1st to 3rd• Leigh – Chamberlayne – Brook Rd connection• Cannon Branch Greenway extension. Semmes to Belvidere and/or 9th

Pedestrian Needs (INC 1b) Results

Makes Sense

- I know Southside is terrible for pedestrians - getting worse as it gets more dense and more people are trying to get around on foot
- Lots of places in Southside that need sidewalks improved and to be safer for disabled persons and children; sidewalks need to be level
- Former industrial areas need sidewalks now (Southside, Scott's Addition, etc)
- Main & 25th - fix or need more sidewalks (cobblestone is hard with wheelchair)
- Fairfield Ave needs more pedestrian signs
- Hull St sidewalks have been bust

Missing

- Downtown, Shockoe, and Church Hill are all inaccessible for pedestrians with mobility issues. There are sidewalks, but they are uneven due to tree roots pushing up bricks and lack curb ramps in many places
- Walking across Mosby St in front of school speeding
- Getting across the street at circle intersection on 25th, Fairmount, and Nine Mile Rd
- The area around the Leigh St viaduct and Broad St between Church Hill and downtown is super dangerous for pedestrians
- Hospital & Oliver Hill Way - not pedestrian friendly considering traffic
- Mechanicsville Tpke & Fairfield Way - unsafe crossings and need sidewalks
- Nine Mile - more sidewalks
- Needs to be a light and signal crosswalk to slow down traffic & protect pedestrians on Fairfield Ave
- Williamsburg Rd to Laburnum, Shopping center area can use a slightly expanded width and appears to have the ability to expand
- Broad St needs signaled crosswalks for pedestrians between the hospital and Church Hill and something to protect pedestrians who have to cross the highway on-ramps (!!)
- Mosby at the Leigh St Viaduct needs better crosswalks with signals that only "release" pedestrians at the bridge & by the school. Something needs to be done to keep cars out of the bike lanes too.
- Sidewalks needed - Cool Ln & Mechanicsville Tpke. When I have to stop at the light to get to school it takes a while and I have to be there at a certain time
- Southside needs more crosswalks and sidewalks on all main roads
- Increased connections between neighborhoods (Chimborazo/Oakwood to Fulton/Montrose; Chimborazo Park to Gillies Creek Park, extend sidewalks on Government Rd. East End to Northside)?
- Sidewalk accessibility improvements – fill in gaps, add curb cut ramps, etc.

Transit Needs (INC 2) Results

Makes Sense

- Map generally makes sense
- No transit going to Chesterfield Town Center
- Hull Street and Route 1 have poor transit
- There are no buses that go past Cloverleaf Mall
- High need going toward Midlothian
- No sidewalks
- No bus service to Petersburg area
- I agree with the areas marked as well-served, except the buses aren't reliable and don't run frequently enough to be an option half the time (trying to get between Church Hill/East End and the rest of the city)
- I agree that getting to Southside on a bus from downtown is nearly impossible and not worth it; there aren't enough direct routes
- Every route should have increased frequency and/or on-time schedule

Missing

- Hull St bus not frequent enough
- No shelter in Southside Plaza, Belt Blvd & Hull St
- Need bus shelter at Midlothian @ Cloverleaf stop + Beaufont + Forest Hill/Walmart
- The bus stops in the city lack shade and seating which makes them brutal in the summer
- Only 1 transfer plaza? Everyone doesn't go to it
- Add more connectivity/nodes between routes for effective transfers. Getting between regions can take several transfers or involve lots of waiting for the next bus when the schedules don't work together
- Transfer to Pulse is an issue
- Bus stop transfers are far apart & increase pedestrians getting hit
- Bus stops too far; disabled people and families need more convenient stops and transfers
- Need bus shelters
- Need water guards to prevent getting soaked when bad weather
- System is too complex in general
- Need better transfer options all around even with the Pulse connection
- Shelters should be a priority
- [Transfers to Pulse in the Capitol District \(generally 9th St to 14th St\) are still a need \(have to walk 6 blocks\)](#)
- [Reroute Pulse up to E Broad St at 25th St, adding stops at Chimborazo Park \(could use the roundabout to allow for Eastbound & Westbound travel\), Gillies Creek \(existing stop location on Government\), loop around on Williamsburg \(stop somewhere near intersection\)](#)
- [E Main, Williamsburg, Airport route: Main Street station, 25th, Fulton Hill Pulse Stop, Montrose Stop, Laburnum, Airport](#)

Safety/Security Needs (INC 5) Results

Makes Sense	Missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O St at 20th St and Carrington St is high need. • Mosby St at P St is high need • Redd St and Coalter St at Mosby Court are high need • Fairfield Ave at 23rd St is high need • Fairmount Ave at 22nd St is high need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairfield Elementary School needs a speed bump - kids are almost ran over on Phaup St • Fairfield Ave needs speed bumps (the entire street) - kid and senior safety • 1500 Coalter St/Red & Coalter St - Public housing areas need speed bumps (Mosby, Fairfield, Oliver Hill Crossing) • Speed bumps in public housing • Speed bumps on Coalter St • Crossing in front of MLK & Q St (kids can't cross for school) • Somewhere kids can stand waiting on school bus out of rain & weather • Not all bus stops have shelter for waiting on buses • Crosswalk sign time should be extended - not long enough to cross if you have a disability • MLK – Left turn lanes onto Mosby St are confusing - left most lane supposed to go into school but people are using it to beat the light • Roundabout on Murray St coming off of I-95 - not safe, no reflectors, reflectors need to be big • Hospital & Valley - no pedestrian crossing, no bike lanes, no crossing light, no stop light

Maintenance Needs (INC 7) Results

Makes Sense	Missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairfield Ave and Nine Mile Rd have terrible sidewalks • Hull St, Broad Rock, and Belt Rd make sense for sidewalk maintenance • Sidewalks needed in Montrose Heights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairmount and Fairfield Aves need consistent, smooth sidewalks and protected crosswalk infrastructure (and Nine Mile Rd - the sidewalks just end) • Fulton Hill - all sidewalks need fixing – Parker St, Salem St, etc. • Mechanicsville & Fairfield Way to Mosby St & T St sidewalks need to be replaced • Repair on sidewalks • More ramps for handicapped individuals • Williamsburg Rd & Nine Mile need bike lanes

Overlap with Top Issues from Public Input

At the end of the session, focus group participants were asked to look at the top 10 issues in communities of concern in the East End that were identified through public input. These issues were previously identified as the top issue from 5,000+ public comments from the Phase 1 survey and prior survey efforts.

Participants placed a dot at each issue if that issue came up during the review of the needs maps.

Top Issue Identified from Public Input	No. of Dots
Crossing the street feels unsafe, especially at Mechanicsville Tpke & Fairfield Ave	8
Many streets lack sidewalks, and existing sidewalks are cracked	7
Crossing Mosby Street at MLK Middle School feels unsafe	6
Potholes and poor pavement, especially on Williamsburg Rd and Government Rd	5
Buses are infrequent and require too many transfers to/from the East End, especially Fulton	5
No shelters and benches at bus stops	4
Bicycle connections lacking between Fulton and Rockett's Landing	4
Speeding and lack of pedestrian crossings on Williamsburg Ave	4
Speeding on Fairmount Ave	2
Riding a bike on the Leigh Street Viaduct feels unsafe	0

