



Engagement Phase 2 Summary

The second phase of engagement for Richmond Connects occurred between October 2022 and February 2023. This phase of engagement focused on summarizing and distilling the wide universe of needs identified in Phase 1 into top needs within Communities of Concern.

Engagement activities in this phase included:

1. 90-Second Video
2. General Updates to Existing Base
3. Opt-In for Text Messages
4. In-Person Pop-Ups
5. Telephone Town Hall Meetings
6. Initial Needs Maps Online Review
7. Focus Group Sessions

The community outreach during this phase focused heavily on engaging residents in Communities of Concern in meaningful conversations. It was not focused on generating high numbers of responses. Phase 1 engagement activities, combined with relevant engagement activities from Richmond 300 and Path to Equity resulted in over 5,000 individual comments identifying transportation needs.

Engagement Phase 1 of Richmond Connects and prior efforts were successful at reaching high numbers of survey responses thanks to a variety of engagement techniques including convenient web-based surveys. However, these results represent a higher proportion of white Richmonders than Richmond's population. There were fewer survey results for people who are low-income, non-white, Hispanic, and under age 25.

Richmond Connects is intended to be an equity-centered plan to use transportation investments to improve access to opportunities and reduce barriers for individuals who are most burdened. It is these most burdened individuals who are non-white, Hispanic, low-income, under 25, especially if an individual identifies with more than one of these categories. These people are typically hardest to reach through conventional outreach methods.

The Richmond Connects team provided updates to the general public through several activities described below. The team purposefully focused resources on activities, including in-person pop-ups and focus groups, to engage individuals within communities of concern. These included non-white, Hispanic, low-income, and people under age 25, as well



Figure 1: East End Focus Group. Phase 2 Engagement activities focused on deeper conversations with people in communities of concern, resulting in more robust understanding of the needs of people and communities who experience transportation inequities.

as low-income renters, seniors, and people with limited mobility. While these engagement activities produced lower numbers of responses and cannot be tied to statistically significant quantitative analysis of results, the interaction with individuals within the communities of concern was more robust, inclusive, and encouraged two-way dialogue to understand the communities' needs from their perspectives.

The Richmond Connects team identified five Communities of Concern areas, based on demographic data including income, renter status, race, mobility, age, and other factors.

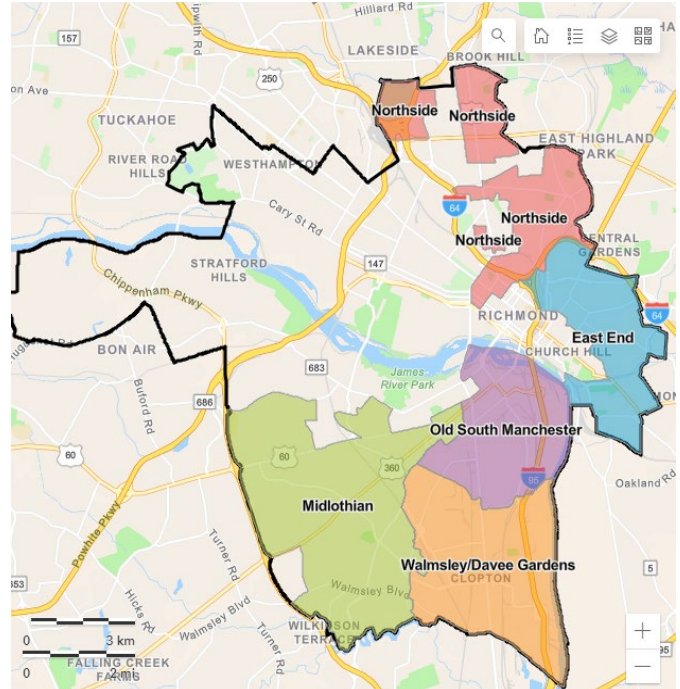


Figure 2: Communities of Concern in City of Richmond. These areas were identified as areas whose residents are most likely to be experiencing transportation injustices.

90-Second Video

The Richmond Connects team prepared a 90-second video to explain what Richmond Connects is and some key themes of what we heard needs to be fixed. The team posted this video on the RVAConnects.com website and shared it on social media and through e-blasts.

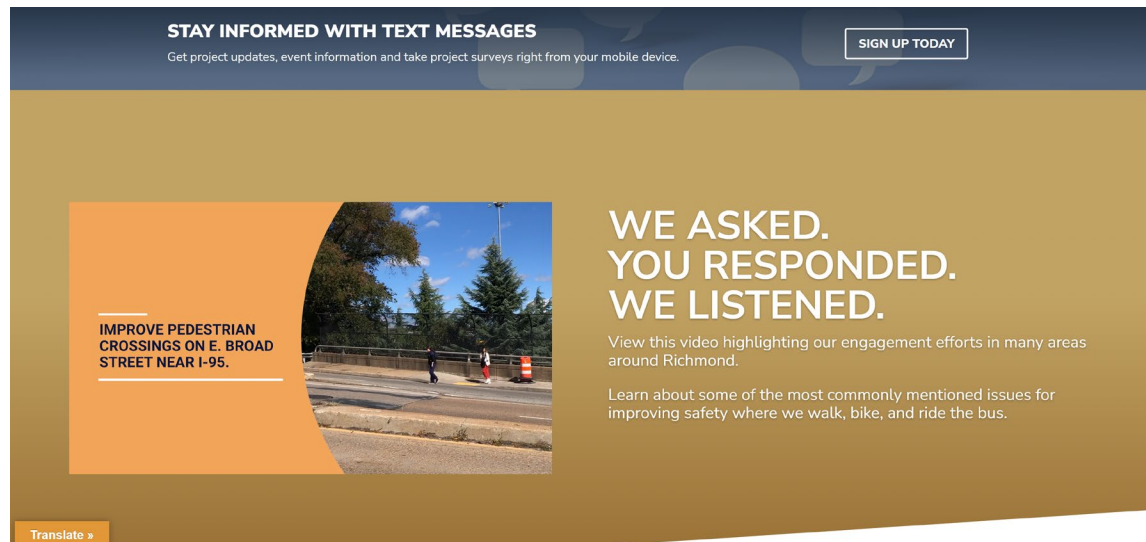


Figure 3: Screenshot of RVAConnects.com Website Showing 90-Second Video

General Updates to Existing Base

The Richmond Connects team sent numerous e-blasts and social media posts to keep the general public abreast of progress during Engagement Phase 2.

Social Media Posts:

- Nov. 18 – Facebook Post – Watch the new video
- Dec. 1 – Facebook Post – Sign up for text messages
- Dec 13 – Facebook post – Watch the new video and learn about...
- Dec. 16 – Facebook post – Sign up for text messages
- Dec. 20 – Facebook post – “Improve roads and transit stops at Southside Plaza.” Watch this short video and learn about...
- Dec. 27 – Facebook post – Sign up to receive text messages
- Jan. 3 – Facebook post – “Better crosswalks near Mosby and Q Street.” Watch this short video and learn about...
- Jan. 10 – Facebook post – “Improve bike safety along Brook Road.” Watch this short video and learn about...

E-Blasts:

- Subject: Watch the Richmond Connects Video! Sent Mon, November 14th, 2022 4:15 PM (1,000 recipients)
- Subject: Richmond Connects Telephone Town Hall Meetings. Sent Tue, December 6th, 2022 4:00 PM (927 recipient)
- Subject: Review Initial Data of Transportation Needs. Sent Wed, February 1st 10:00 AM (937 recipients)

Opt-In for Text Messages

The Richmond Connects team set up an SMS text opt-in service through SlickText that allows people to opt-in to receive text messages. This builds a database of mobile phone numbers for ongoing outreach and engagement through SMS text. The primary purpose in Phase 2 is to start allowing people to opt-in. It is anticipated that this service will be used in future phases to deliver on-going awareness and participation through project updates, news, events, and text surveys.

The Richmond Connects team promoted the opt-in for text messages in several ways:

- Placing a static banner at the top of the RVAconnects.com website
- Adding a message to the rotating banner of the RVAconnects.com website
- Social media posts
- E-blasts
- Handing out flyers during the in-person pop-ups
- Printing a message and QR code onto snack bag giveaways that were used during the in-person pop-ups

As of February 21, 2023, the database contained 46 mobile phone numbers not inclusive of the Richmond Connects team.



Figure 4: Opt-In for Texts Flyer.
Distributed during pop-up engagement.

While the number of opt-ins remains small at this point, a geo-fencing advertisement campaign is an option for increasing the database of phone numbers, however it requires a significant cost and allocation of resources.

In-Person Pop-Ups

In the first phase of engagement, the Richmond Connects team compiled the transportation-related input that thousands of Richmonders had already provided for the Richmond 300 Master Plan and the Path to Equity Policy Guide. Over 3,000 comments had already been provided for these efforts! The Richmond Connects team developed a survey for viewing these comments and providing new comments. Together with the prior comments, the input from Phase 1 totaled over 5,000 individual responses. Many of the responses were mapped, and others were not. The team is using the set of 5,000 comments in multiple ways to identify needs and develop recommendations.

In the second phase of engagement, the Richmond Connects team examined all 5,000 comments from Phase 1 and from these comments **identified the top 10 needs in the areas that had the highest densities of residents in Communities of Concern.**

The team prepared five banners illustrating the top 10 needs in the five areas of Communities of Concern. The team took these portable banners into the communities to talk with residents about these issues, ask if they agree these are the top issues, and identify **which of these issues are most important to address first.**

Table 1 lists the locations and dates where the Richmond Connects team conducted in-person outreach. **These locations were purposefully selected to reach residents in communities of concern, including BIPOC, persons in low-income households, seniors, youth and young adults, and persons whose primary language is not English.**



Figure 5: Richmond Connects Team Member Chenice Brown conducting outreach with banner poster

What would you fix first?

These are the top issues in the East End focus area that Richmonders identified in prior surveys. Choose up to 3 issues you think should be fixed first, and put a dot in the white box above the photo.

Place your dots in this area!

<p>Riding a bike on the Leigh Street viaduct feels unsafe</p>	<p>Crossing the street feels unsafe, especially at Mechanicsville Tpk and Fairfield Ave.</p>	<p>Crossing Mosby Street at MLK Middle School feels unsafe</p>	<p>Speeding on Fairmount Ave.</p>	<p>Many streets lack sidewalks, and existing sidewalks are cracked</p>
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Figure 6: Banner posters for the in-person pop-ups asked people in communities of concern which of the top 10 issues they would fix first.

Table 1: In-Person Pop-Up Outreach Events and Locations

Event & Location	Day	Communities of Concern
John Marshall High School Family Engagement Night	Nov. 15, 2022	Northside – primarily low-income African American families
Neighborhood Resource Center COVID Testing Day	Nov. 17, 2022	East End
Kanawha Plaza Grand Illumination RVA	Dec. 2, 2022	Northside, Manchester – all demographics
Big Apple Grocery Pop-Up, Richmond Hwy	Dec. 3, 2022	Walmsley – primarily Spanish-speaking, African American, and low-income
Christmas on McArthur	Dec. 10, 2022	Northside
Hillside Community Holiday Event	Dec 10, 2022	Manchester – primarily low-income African American
Q-Market Pop-Up, 1167 Southwood Pkwy	Dec. 17, 2022,	Walmsley – primarily Hispanic
Southside Plaza Pop-Up, 507 E. Southside Plaza	Dec. 17, 2022,	Walmsley
Night Market at Stone Brewery	Dec. 18, 2022	East End – primarily white
Rays Barber Shop Holiday Toy Drive	Dec. 18, 2022	Northside – primarily low-income African American
Peter Paul Development Center Family Dinner	Dec. 20, 2022	East End – low income, all Communities of Concern
Southside Community Center	Dec. 29. 2022	Walmsley
Broad Rock Community Center	Dec. 29. 2022	Walmsley

The tables below show the results from the in-person pop-ups, combined with the results from the focus groups, as described in the next section. The issues are displayed in descending order of dot votes. The issue with the most dot votes is shown at the top.

At the pop-up events, Richmond Connects team members also asked people if there are other major transportation issues that need to be addressed first, before any of the top 10 issues shown on the banner posters. The bullets below each table describe other major issues that people mentioned.

Table 2: Ranked Top Issues in East End Communities of Concern

Rank	Issue	Total # of Dot Votes	Neighborhood Resource Center COVID Testing Day	Peter Paul Development Center Family Dinner	Night Market at Stone Brewery	East End Focus Group
1	Many streets lack sidewalks, and existing sidewalks are cracked	43	3	23	10	7
2	Crossing Mosby Street at MLK Middle School feels unsafe	40	0	34	0	6
3	Crossing the street feels unsafe, especially at Mechanicsville Tpke and Fairfield Ave	36	0	28	0	8
4	Potholes and poor pavement, especially on Williamsburg Rd and Government Rd	26	8	0	13	5
5	Speeding on Fairmount Ave	23	0	21	0	2
6	Bicycle connections lacking between Fulton and Rocketts Landing	21	0	0	17	4
7	No shelters at benches and bus stops	20	4	8	4	4
8	Buses are infrequent and require too many transfers from East End, especially Fulton	13	8	0	0	5
9	Speeding and lack of safe pedestrian crossings on Williamsburg Rd	11	7	0	0	4
10	Riding a bike on the Leigh Street viaduct feels unsafe	3	0	0	3	0

Other issues in the East End (some provide specific locations to issues already identified):

- Crossing the street feels unsafe at:
 - Williamsburg Rd and Darbytown Rd
 - The roundabout at 23rd St and Phaup St
 - The roundabout on 25th St and Fairmount Ave (Family Dollar)
 - Redd St/T St and Mechanicsville Tnpk
- Traffic goes too fast on Coalter Street (1500 block) in Mosby Court
- There’s no bus shelter at Westhampton and Williamsburg Rd

Table 3: Ranked Top Issues in Northside Communities of Concern

Rank	Issue	Total # of Dot Votes	John Marshall High School Family Engagement Night	Kanawha Plaza Illuminate RVA	Rays Barber Shop Holiday Toy Drive	Christmas on MacArthur	Northside Focus Group
1	Many streets lack sidewalks or existing sidewalks are broken	65	0	10	7	43	5
2	Speeding on major streets, like Laburnum Ave, Brook Rd, and Chamberlayne Ave	57	3	6	11	33	4
3	Intersection at Laburnum Ave and Hermitage Rd feels unsafe	55	1	6	0	47	1
4	Pulse BRT does not serve Northside	41	1	4	9	22	5
5	Potholes and poor pavement on streets	34	0	4	7	18	5
6	Riding a bike from Northside to downtown feels unsafe	33	0	4	0	28	1
7	Lack of bus stops, especially near senior housing	30	0	9	0	14	7
8	Crossing the street on North Avenue feels unsafe	28	2	12	12	0	2
9	Walking and riding a bike on Chamberlayne feels unsafe	27	3	3	6	13	2
10	Riding a bike on Brookland Park Blvd feels unsafe	12	0	2	0	9	1

Other issues in the Northside (some provide specific locations to issues already identified):

- Crossing the street feels unsafe at:
 - Chamberlayne and John Marshall High School
- Poor lighting in the VMFA area
- Clean-up/beautification needed on:
 - Laburnum Ave and around Bryan Park
 - Cannon Creek area, Brookland Parkway, and Dove Street
 - Robin Hood Road
- Street cleaning blows leaves right into the bike lanes
- Traffic goes too fast on:
 - Bellevue Ave at Crestwood Rd
 - Dumbarton
- Drivers run stop signs at Bellevue and Crestwood / Fauquier and Bellevue.
- Crashes on Westbrook Rd and Chamberlayne Ave
- Lack of left turn lanes at every intersection along Rt 1 and along Chamberlayne, and city bus “cut in” needs to be reviewed
- Bike lanes needed Brook Rd to Lombardy to Grace
- Inability to walk to Scott’s Addition
- Fall Line Trail – information requested
- Lack of sidewalks on Fauquier Ave and side streets
- Potholes on Riverside Dr. – Pony Pasture cause you to fall off your bike

Table 4: Ranked Top Issues in Manchester area Communities of Concern

Rank	Issue	Total # of Dot Votes	Kanawha Plaza Illuminate RVA	Hillside Community Holiday Event	Southside Focus Group
1	Drivers do not stop for pedestrians in crosswalks	19	7	10	2
2	Many streets lack sidewalks and lighting at night	18	9	7	2
3	Crossing the street feels unsafe, especially Hull St, Semmes Ave, and Cowardin	16	6	8	2
4	Potholes and poor pavement	14	11	0	3
5	Bus stops lack shelter and benches	13	6	5	2
6	Intersections at Cowardin Ave, Hull St, and Semmes Ave feel unsafe	10	3	5	2
7	Pulse BRT does not serve Southside	9	2	5	2
7	Belvidere, Manchester, and Mayo Bridges feel unsafe for walking and bicycling	9	6	0	3
9	Infrequent bus service and lack of stops in Southside	7	5	0	2
10	Speeding along Hull St	6	4	0	2

No other issues were recorded in the Manchester area during the in-person pop-up events.

Table 5: Ranked Top Issues in Walmsley area Communities of Concern

Rank	Issue	Total # of Dot Votes	Big Apple Grocery	Broad Rock & Southside Community Centers	Q-Market and Southside Plaza	Southside Focus Group
1	Potholes and poor pavement maintenance on Rte 1 (Richmond Hwy)	15	5	4	5	1
2	Potholes and poor pavement maintenance on Commerce Rd	13	6	1	4	2
3	No shelters and benches at bus stops	12	3	5	4	0
4	Many streets in Southside lack sidewalks, and existing sidewalks are broken	11	3	5	2	1
4	Missing sidewalks on Rte 1 (Richmond Hwy)	11	1	1	8	1
6	Speeding on Rte 1 (Richmond Hwy)	10	2	5	3	0
6	Lack of sidewalks on Walmsley Blvd	10	3	3	3	1
8	Infrequent bus service and lack of stops in Southside	6	2	1	2	1
8	Very few bike paths in Southside	6	1	3	1	1
10	Potholes and poor pavement maintenance on Bells Rd	4	1	2	0	1

Other issues in the Walmsley area (some provide specific locations to issues already identified):

- The water that creates large puddles and hazards along the Richmond HWY (right side as you travel south) is a huge problem for all travelers.
- Rain along Commerce Rd. is bad under the bridge.
- More bike racks would be good.

- The free GRTC Transit service is great for kids that do not have another way of getting around. Not everyone can afford a new vehicle.
- Better sidewalks and bus stops along Richmond Highway and Bells Rd. would be great.

Table 6: Top Issues in Midlothian area Communities of Concern

Issue	Total # of Dot Votes	Southside Focus Group
Missing sidewalks on Hull St, Hey Rd, and Elkhardt Rd near River City Middle School	1	1
Potholes and poor road maintenance throughout Southside, especially Old Warwick Rd and Hull St	1	1
Dangerous pedestrian crossings along Midlothian Tpke	1	1
Southside Plaza bus transfer station lacks sidewalks and amenities	1	1
Speeding along Hull St	1	1
Bus service is infrequent and bus stops do not feel safe	1	1
Missing sidewalks along Hull St	1	1
Speeding and missing sidewalks on Broad Rock Rd	0	0
Very few bike paths in Southside	0	0
Missing and broken sidewalks throughout Southside	0	0

The in-person pop-up events did not gather input on the top issues in the Midlothian area. Southside focus group participants identified issues that came up during conversation in the focus group session.



Figure 7: Pop-Up at Big Apple Grocery. This pop-up engaged Spanish-speaking, African American, and low-income individuals on needs in the Walmsley area communities of concern.



Figure 8: Pop-Up at Kanawha Plaza Grand Illumination Event. This pop-up engaged a variety of demographics on needs in the Northside and Manchester area communities of concern.

Telephone Town Hall Meetings

The Richmond Connects team held two Telephone Town Hall Meetings in early December 2022:

- Wednesday December 7, 2022, 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- Thursday December 8, 2022, 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

The Telephone Town Hall Meetings were targeted to select zip codes in communities of concern. Residents in these areas received phone calls inviting them to join the Telephone Town Hall Meeting. No internet connection was required. Participants participated directly from their phone.

Over 1,400 people accepted the phone call. At peak participation, over 300 people participated in the 12/7 meeting and 275 people participated in the 12/8 meeting.

The Richmond Connects team gave an overview of the Richmond Connects process and answered questions. The team shared the top needs in the communities of concern areas. Participants answered polls to provide feedback and asked questions.

Participants were asked if they agree with the top needs their neighbors identified. 83% of participants in the 12/7 meeting and 80% of participants in the 12/8 meeting who responded said Yes or Mostly Yes.

The Richmond Connects team used the questions asked during the Telephone Town Hall Meetings to prepare a Frequently Asked Questions page, which will be available on the RVAconnects.com website.

Initial Needs Maps Online Review

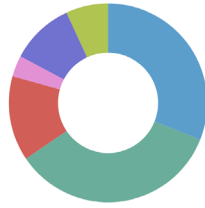
The Richmond Connects team released initial results of the data-driven needs analysis as a StoryMap for stakeholder and public review. The results consisted of two maps for each of the 11 Investment Need Categories:

- The **unweighted need map** showed the areas of the City that have transportation-related infrastructure and service needs for that Investment Need Category
- The **weighted need map** applied the additional weight to reflect the 10 Equity Factors

The Richmond Connects team asked the Advisory Committee to review these initial results of the data-driven needs analysis and provide comments. This information was made available to the public as well. Viewers could provide comments on the maps between January 18th and February 6th, 2023. 29 comments were received on the initial needs maps.

Comments Received

29



- Bicycle Need (INC 1a) 9
- Pedestrian Need (INC 1b) 10
- Transit Need (INC 2) 4
- Land Use Need (INC 4) 1
- Safety/Security Need (INC 5) 3
- Connectivity Need (INC 6) 2

- **Category:** Bicycle Need (INC 1a) *Received on January 23, 2023*
Comment: Please consider bike lanes on West Carnation head over Midlothian onto Warwick. This will align with RVA Bike Share station coming to Warwick.
- **Category:** Bicycle Need (INC 1a) *Received on January 31, 2023*
Comment: Bike Lanes!
- **Category:** Bicycle Need (INC 1a) *Received on February 1, 2023*
Comment: The Floyd Ave bikeway has been a failure, as compromises were made that eliminated some of the design features that would have deterred car drivers from using Floyd Ave as a thru-street. This can be fixed in part by eliminating the option for vehicles to turn onto Floyd from major N-S cross streets like Boulevard, Robinson, and Meadow.
- **Category:** Bicycle Need (INC 1a) *Received on February 2, 2023*
Comment: Biking in this area is incredibly dangerous and we need protected/separated bike infrastructure to get over broad/train tracks and 64/95.
- **Category:** Bicycle Need (INC 1a) *Received on February 2, 2023*

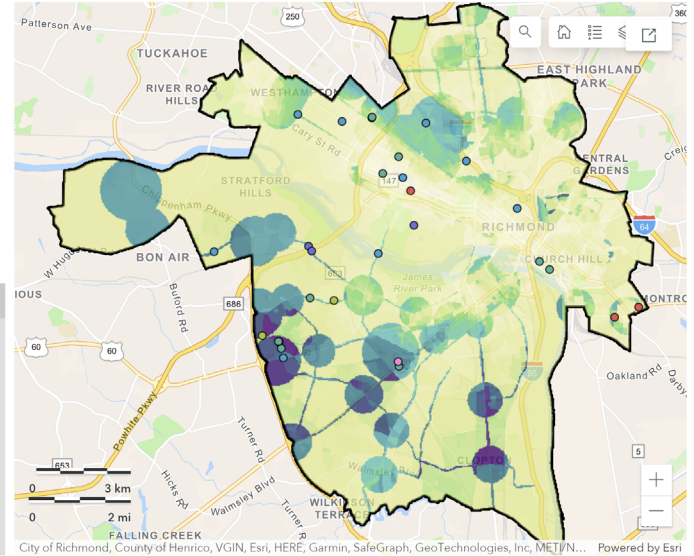


Figure 9: Dashboard of Comments Received on Initial Weighted Needs Maps

Focus Groups

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. These focus groups were conducted to hear and understand what residents in Richmond's communities of concern thought was accurate in the data-driven needs maps, and what was missing.

The focus group sessions for Phase 2 were held:

- **East End:** Thursday January 19, 2023 | 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm | Neighborhood Resource Center
- **Southside:** Thursday January 26, 2023 | 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm | Hull Street Library
- **Northside:** Thursday February 2, 2023 | 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm | Six Points Innovation Center

The Richmond Connects team received applications for focus group participants from the general public and selected participants who identified with at least one community of concern (e.g. BIPOC, low-income, senior, youth, limited mobility, etc.).

The focus groups discussed the needs maps for the entire City of Richmond, often focusing on the neighborhoods within the surrounding area (i.e. many of the comments from the East End focus group pertain to the East End, and other areas throughout 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

Comments on the **bicycle** needs map included existing bike lanes that need enhanced protection, streets that need new bike infrastructure, a lack of bike infrastructure connectivity, and a lack of bike infrastructure overall in Southside.

Comments on the **pedestrian** needs map discussed certain intersections and roads that needed additional pedestrian crossing improvements and areas that need sidewalks.

Comments on the **transit** needs map talked about a lack of reliability in the bus system, a lack of connectivity to certain areas, bus stops lacking shelters and benches, a lack of frequency notably to and from the East End, certain intersections that need bus stops, and issues of accessibility with the bus.

Comments on the **safety/security** needs map mostly discussed pedestrian crossings, safe bus stops, issues with roundabouts, and traffic calming infrastructure along certain streets.

Comments on the **maintenance** needs map mostly revolved around certain roads that needed sidewalk improvements or have potholes.

The full list of comments for each focus groups is available in each focus group summary report.