

Richmond Connects Engagement Phase 2

SOUTHSIDE FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

January 26, 2023 | 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm | Hull Street Library

Participants

Margaret Thompson, Westover
Cecelia Kidd, Hillside Court
William Davis, Hillside Court
Marionna Cathan, Hillside Court
Kiarra Gilliam, Hillside Court
Barbara Starkey Goode, Oak Grove

Karl L Zweerink, Manchester

Richmond Connects Team

Chenice Brown, OETM
Jessica Dimmick, EPR
Kelli Rowan, OETM

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. Participants also discussed what needs are most important to address first.

The participants in this focus group reside in communities of concern areas in Richmond's Southside. The group discussed the needs maps for the entire City of Richmond. Many comments pertain specifically to the many areas in Southside, 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

Many of the comments on sticky notes that were about the Southside were captured in the Top 10 Needs Community of Concern posters, and also mirrored other prominent public comment themes from the previous engagement initiatives. Transit needs talked about infill bus stops and bus stops lacking amenities



like shelters and benches. Maintenance comments mostly revolved around certain roads that needed sidewalk improvements or have potholes. 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 overall in Southside. 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. Blue text indicates that a sticky note corresponded with a numbered sticky dot placed on the needs maps; the number in parentheses is the corresponding sticky dot identifier. Black text indicates a comment that did not correspond with a sticky dot placed on the needs maps. Participants often noted needs and voiced opinions about what should be done irrespective of the needs maps. 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"> From Harwood to Bells Rd, Rte 1 needs bike lanes - sidewalk is fine, but needs bike lanes (1) All along Midlothian Tpke it's difficult to bike (5) Agree high bicycle needs in all the nodes in Southside Rte 1 going over Lee Bridge onto Belvidere - everyone goes fast - bike lane needs barrier so you feel safer (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike lane stops at the War Memorial (3) Bicyclists don't follow the direction of traffic Mayo Bridge needs a bike lane, will be replaced and needs a bike lane (4)

Pedestrian Needs (INC 1b) Results

Makes Sense	Missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streetlights missing on Midlothian Tpke past Carnation (2) Commerce needs sidewalks starting from Maury to Richmond Hwy (4) All the nodes are high need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring Rock Green - crossing the street on Midlothian is dangerous @ Cloverleaf Mall Hull Street traffic stops at Railroad Museum coming off the bridge, so pedestrians dart out across the street (5) Hull Street right by the River should be higher pedestrian need (5) Halifax, all these streets should be one-way. Unsafe, speeding need speed bump (1) Gordon Ave, Oak Grove playground, 22nd & Gordon

Transit Needs (INC 2) Results

Makes Sense

- Every bus stop needs seating, shelter, trash can
- A bus stop on 14th St. Residents can't park because bus can't turn. 14th and Fairfax - bus stop not utilized
- Fairfax going to Rte 1 to catch the bus (Flem's paint shop) - hard to cross the street (1)

Missing

- Bus stops on Harwood need shelter
- Harwood & Long St - bus drivers don't come down the hill at certain times of the year at Hillside Ct
- Rte 1 @ 7-11 at Hillside - need shelter
- Every bus stop needs a shelter! Bus stop on Lone St needs a shelter
- Columbia @ Harwood needs shelter
- Rte 1 @ Hopkins - needs shelter
- Broad towards Arthur Ashe from Willow Lawn - need to paint red lanes - everybody gets stuck in the left lane because it turns into bus only lane
- Missing shelter on Bruce St, Lone St, Harwood and Richmond Hwy
- Put signs for next bus is coming at bus stops
- Extend Pulse into Southside. My son is disabled. He rides the Pulse from Willow Lawn, but has difficulty getting into Southside
- Southside Plaza needs sidewalks
- Broad @ 4th (Walgreens) has a shelter, needs a bench (1)

Safety/Security Needs (INC 5) Results

Makes Sense	Missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12th St @ Dock St - 4 way stop sign but people treat it as a yield, not a stop. People don't stop. You can't see the stop sign from far away (3)• High crime @ Jack Rabbit on Hull Street between service center and store - a lot of shootings happen (1)• Turning right from Bruce onto 21st St is dangerous - hard to see if you're a driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roundabout at Maury off I-95 causes confusion. Drivers think they need to stop, but it's just a yield. Causes more crashes than a stop light, and causes more traffic too (6)• Semmes Ave @ 10th - cars go really fast - Potterfield Bridge connecting no crosswalks, lots of people trying to cross the street (6)• M&T Jamaican Restaurant - hard to cross Semmes Ave• 21st @ Gordon all-way stop - Gordon is one-way has 2 speed bumps - school bus stops here, a lot of crashes have happened here (3)• Hull Street from Manchester Bridge to Commerce - sidewalk is blocked due to construction (5)• Hull Street @ Railroad Museum, there is no room for pedestrians or bicyclists• 22nd and Gordon - playground here - should be something to slow traffic (5)• Joplin all the way from Harwood til Bruce and Commerce - speed bumps• Speed bump on Southlawn (?) in Hillside. Lots of kids in the neighborhood• Broad Rock @ Warwick @ church/cemetery, lights turn fast, lots of pedestrian crossings, including kids crossroad, Hispanic community (4)• Sunlight at Coll Ln @ Mechanicsville Tpke - driver coming from Mechanicsville trying to turn left, blinds (2)• Intersection of Dock St @ Canal St - hard to see the stop sign on the floodwall and nobody stops

Maintenance Needs (INC 7) Results

Makes Sense	Missing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayo bridge replacement• Clopton and Hull and Murray - needs to be repaired - whole street is cracked• Turning from Hull St onto Midlothian has lots of potholes• Ingram - broken sidewalk by daycare (1)• Lone St @ Bruce - broken sidewalks (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minefee - broken sidewalk not shown on map (3)• Edwards Ave @ 1700 block - broken sidewalks (4)• Potholes on Chicago Street (5)

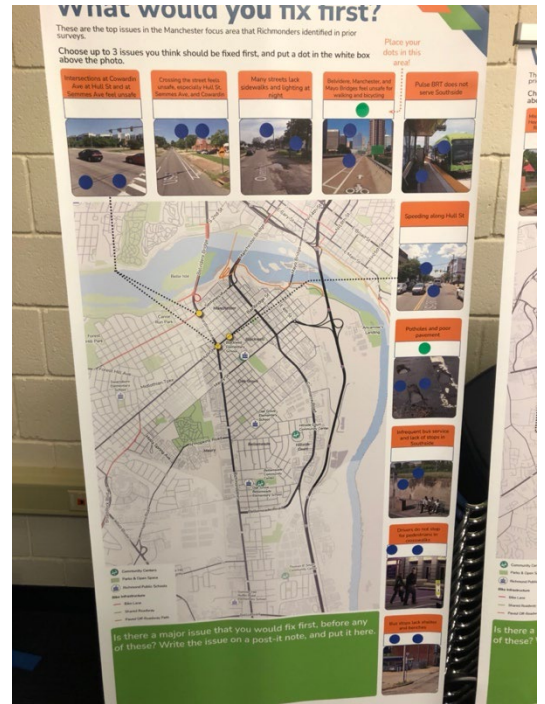
Overlap with Top Issues from Public Input

At the end of the session, focus group participants were asked to look at the top 10 issues in communities of concern in the Swansboro, Manchester, and Walmsley areas 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.

Facilitators asked the participants to put a sticky dot on each issue they thought was most important; each participant was only given 3 sticky dots each.

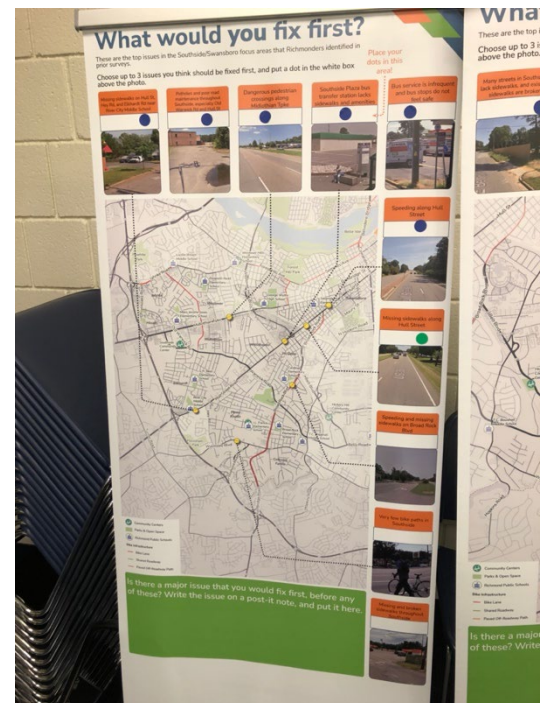
Manchester

Top Issue Identified from Public Input	No. of Dots
Belvidere, Manchester, and Mayo Bridges feel unsafe for walking & biking	3
Potholes and poor pavement	3
Intersection at Cowardin Ave at Hull St and Semmes Ave feels unsafe	2
Crossing the street feels unsafe, especially at Hull St, Semmes Ave, and Cowardin	2
Many streets lack sidewalks and lighting at night	2
Pulse BRT does not serve Southside	2
Speeding along Hull St	2
Infrequent bus service & lack of stops in Southside	2
Drivers do not stop for pedestrians in crosswalks	2
Bus stops lack shelters and benches	2



Swansboro

Top Issue Identified from Public Input	No. of Dots
Missing sidewalks on Hull St, Hey Rd, and Elkhardt Rd near River City Middle School	1
Potholes and poor road maintenance throughout Southside, especially Old Warwick Rd and Hull St	1
Dangerous pedestrian crossings along Midlothian Tpke	1
Southside Plaza bus transfer station lacks sidewalks and amenities	1
Bus service is infrequent and bus stops do not feel safe	1
Speeding along Hull St	1
Missing sidewalks on Hull St	1
Speeding and missing sidewalks on Broad Rock Blvd	0
Very few bike paths in Southside	0



Top Issue Identified from Public Input	No. of Dots
Missing and broken sidewalks throughout Southside	0

Walmsley

Top Issue Identified from Public Input	No. of Dots
Potholes and poor pavement maintenance on Commerce Rd	2
Many streets in Southside lack sidewalks, and existing sidewalks are broken	1
Potholes and poor pavement maintenance on Rte 1	1
Infrequent bus service and lack of stops in Southside	1
Missing sidewalks on Rte 1	1
Potholes and poor pavement maintenance on Bells Rd	1
Very few bike paths in Southside	1
Lack of sidewalks on Walmsley Blvd	1
Speeding on Rte 1	0
No shelters and benches at bus stops	0

