

Richmond Connects Steering Committee

MEETING SUMMARY

July 25, 2023 | 10:00 am to 11:00 am | Teams

ATTENDEES

Meloni Alexander, City of Richmond Dept. of Public Works (DPW), Parking & Shared Mobility Division

Alex Bell, Renaissance Planning Group (Richmond Connects Consultant Team)

Aaron Bond, City of Richmond Dept. of Planning & Development Review (PDR)

Chenice Brown, City of Richmond Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility (OETM), Community Outreach Specialist

Carla Childs, City of Richmond Dept. of Economic Development

Jessica Dimmick, EPR (Richmond Connects Consultant Team Project Manager)

Bryan Epps, City of Richmond, Office of Sustainability

Tavares Floyd, Liaison for Councilmember Ellen Robertson, Richmond Gateway 6th Voter District

Jakob Helmboldt, DPW, Pedestrian and Trails Coordinator

MS Khara, DPW

Brandon King, OETM

John Kim, DPW

Dironna Moore Clarke, OETM

Ernest Moore Jr., OETM

Atiba Muse, OETM

Michelle Peters, City of Richmond Dept. of Housing and Community Development

Sven Philipsen, Liaison for Councilmember Katherine Jordan, Richmond North Central 2nd Voter District

Kaiden Pritchett, Intern for Richmond West End 1st Voter District

Emily Routman, EPR (Richmond Connects Consultant Team)

Kelli Rowan, OETM

Paul Trapp, Timmons Group (Richmond Connects Consultant Team)

Aaron Weinstock, Renaissance Planning Group (Richmond Connects Consultant Team)

MEETING SUMMARY

Kelli Rowan provided a copy of the meeting presentation to the Steering Committee in advance of this meeting. This summary documents the key points of discussion, action items, and next steps.

To obtain a copy of the meeting presentation, email Kelli Rowan at Kelli.Rowan@rva.gov.

Project and Schedule Update

The Near Term Action Plan is now 80% complete and the Long Term Scenario Plan is 40% complete.

For the Near Term Action Plan, the Needs Analysis is now complete. The Richmond Connects team has been working on developing recommendations to address the needs. The draft recommendations include between 8 and 16 recommendations for each of the 17 Needs Areas to meet the top equity-based transportation needs.

The draft recommendations have been published to a set of 17 surveys as well as posters for public prioritization. Phase 4 of the Richmond Connects engagement process is now underway.



Outreach Update

The Phase 4 survey to review and prioritize the top recommendations for each of the 17 Needs Areas opened on July 10th and will close on August 20th. The Richmond Connects team is promoting the survey through online means and buckslips in utility mailers. The team will focus the majority of its outreach effort on in-person engagement targeting responses from Communities of Concern. The team is tracking survey responses weekly and identifying opportunities for pop-up engagement to reach the areas and populations that are most underrepresented.

Please share the Phase 4 survey with your contacts! The survey will close at 11:59 pm on Sunday August 20th.

www.RVAconnects.com/survey4

The team conducted in-person outreach at the Southwood (Needs Area 11) and Gilpin (Needs Area 4) community resource days and received 138 paper responses and 986 online responses to date.

The team is planning to participate in multiple National Night Out events and other in-person pop-up engagement activities. Telephone Town Halls are scheduled for August 7th and August 8th. Focus groups are tentatively planned for the last two weeks in August.

Long-Term Scenario Planning

The Richmond Connects team reviewed the goals and overall process for the long-term scenario planning effort. The team reviewed the three scenarios that were defined in prior meetings:

- Scenario A: Equitable Transit
- Scenario B: Active Nodes
- Scenario C: Emerging Technology

The team briefly reviewed the draft networks for each scenario. The draft networks are available for Steering Committee review. Each scenario network is provided in an online interactive webmap.

- Scenario A Draft Network Webmap for Steering Committee review: bit.ly/RcScenA
- Scenario B Draft Network Webmap for Steering Committee review: bit.ly/RcScenB
- Scenario C Draft Network Webmap for Steering Committee review: bit.ly/RcScenC

Questions and Discussion:

Bryan Epps asked about future capacity to build in responsiveness to major events (basketball games, evacuations) so that the transportation network can be responsive in an on-demand fashion to these kinds of disruptive and atypical situations.

- The group discussed that traffic operational analysis should accompany changes in land use, including in the Nodes where significant traffic generators may go in (such as an arena in the Diamond District), but this type of analysis is outside of the scope of Richmond Connects.

Aaron Bond asked if one or more of the scenarios could include modeling light rail transit. Dironna Moore Clarke agreed that BRT is the next step toward light rail, and it would be reasonable to consider it as an option along the BRT lines.

- Alex Bell explained that the accessibility model may not show much of a difference between LRT and BRT because it is primarily looking at what destinations can be accessed in terms of a traveler's time. LRT and BRT travel times are not very different. One main difference between LRT and BRT is in the rider experience and ridership potential, but the accessibility model does not model ridership.
- Dironna Moore Clarke clarified that the scenario planning effort may not need to model light rail, but the Richmond Connects plan should include a discussion of LRT, including within the context of the City's other transportation assets and how we expect people to move as a system, which may include larger regional rail for intercity travel.
- The Richmond Connects team will discuss this request further to understand the effort and benefits of modeling light rail in the scenarios.

Aaron Bond asked how the metrics for the scenario planning look at overall safety, such as the likelihood of accidents.

- The group discussed potential ideas for proxies such as the percentage or mileage of protected bike facilities, or percent of high injury network being implemented, or making broad assumptions like automated vehicle improvements could assume a level of safety improvement. However, the group noted that safety improvements are often quantitatively analyzed at a specific project level, and having quantitative precision would be difficult and potentially misleading.
- The group discussed including a qualitative examination of safety in the post-model qualitative assessment of risks.
- Dironna Moore Clarke indicated that safety is one of the 11 investment need categories. The Richmond Connects plan should have sections that discuss the core elements for all of the investment need categories, including immediate recommendations and next steps for the Safety investment need category. The long term scenario planning is not the place for the conversation on safety; that needs to be addressed in the Richmond Connects plan document.

Other Discussion

Dironna Moore Clarke indicated that the Richmond Connects plan needs to not just reference the various policy framework documents like Richmond 300, Vision Zero, Path to Equity, and RVA Green. It needs to tie in all of these things and connect them to implementation of projects and programs. There is a disconnect between the policies and the implementation, and Richmond Connects needs to make the connection.

- Kelli Rowan mentioned a few ideas to address these concerns, including:
 - a programmatic recommendation for the City to adopt a process where every project is reviewed against the policy documents to avoid the disconnect, and
 - a section of “staff picks” recommendations that address problems that City staff see in the implementation of the policies and programs
- Dironna Moore Clarke indicated that in addition to the Near-Term Action Plan with the list of first projects and immediate action items, there is a need for a bigger picture transportation plan beyond the policies, goals, and objectives of Richmond 300. There is a need for comprehensive transportation planning that we need to bring together that connects to issues like TOD, safety, housing, and economic generation. Dironna suggested looking at other counties’ transportation plans within their Comprehensive Plans.
- Kelli Rowan suggested that the final plan will present the recommendations for each Needs Area, and also present the same projects and programs under each investment need category. The executive summary could include the Top 5 Big Moves on each key issue.

NEXT STEPS

Action Items	Person responsible	Deadline
Share the link to the Phase 4 surveys with your professional and personal contacts. www.RVAconnects.com/survey4	All Steering Committee members	ASAP and until the surveys close on August 20 th
Review the three scenario networks and provide feedback. Send your comments and questions to Kelli Rowan. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• bit.ly/RcScenA• bit.ly/RcScenB• bit.ly/RcScenC	All Steering Committee members	Tuesday August 1 st

NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The next Steering Committee is scheduled for Tuesday September 26, 2023, at 10:00 AM.

