



Place: Zoom Meeting

## Meeting Notes

Date: December 10, 2020

Notes: Elizabeth Chambers

Taken by:

Project #: 58538.00

Re: Richmond Bridge Street Local Concerns Public Meeting

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### Meeting Participants

#### *Panelists/Project Team*

- Ravi Venkataraman (Richmond)
- Jason Charest (CCRPC)
- Bryan Davis (CCRPC)
- Sai Sarepalli (CCRPC)
- Jenn Conley (VHB)
- Karen Sentoff (VHB)
- Elizabeth Chambers (VHB)

#### *Richmond Transportation Committee*

- Cathleen Gent
- Jon Kart
- Allen Knowles

*Community Members including residents and business owners*

### Meeting Notes

#### Introduction to Study

- Jenn provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda and how the meeting will proceed on Zoom. Brief introductions of the project team and overview of previous studies were provided (see presentation slides). Jenn introduced a draft project purpose and need statement.
- Regarding the draft project purpose, one resident noted there are many young people in the community, and then pointed to a lack of green space/lack of a greenbelt between the sidewalk and the road. They expressed concern about the lack of space between vehicles and children using the sidewalk.
- Another resident stated that they agree with the purpose, and said they support looking at the east side of bridge for bike/ped connectivity.
- One resident on the transportation committee made a comment on the striped walk on the west side of Bridge Street between Richmond Dental and Richmond Market (i.e. "world's longest pedestrian crossing"). They commented that they had driven south on Bridge Street and attempted to turn right on Railroad Street, and when they stopped for pedestrians in the crosswalk it created confusion. They recommended a pedestrian refuge in order to break up the long crosswalk, and to set the crosswalk back further from the road.
- Regarding the draft project needs, there are two focus areas: enhancing mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists and safety as this area includes a high crash location segment (Bridge Street between Pleasant Street and the south side of the Bridge).



### Public Input

- Karen provided an overview of the study area, including the three focus areas. Starting with Bridge Street between Main Street US 2 and Pleasant Street/Depot Street, input from the community was welcomed.

### ***Bridge Street between Main Street US 2 and Pleasant Street/Depot Street***

- One resident, who identified as a cyclist and pedestrian, said that when walking on the east side of Bridge Street, the lack of sidewalk after the crosswalk by Sweet Simone's is an issue. They also said that when people travel on foot from TD Bank to Pleasant Street or further south on Bridge Street, they have to either walk through the drive thru or go onto the street. They then said that traffic should be calmed on the street, citing times when they have been in the crosswalk and had cars still drive past, and suggested speed bumps and a reduced speed limit.
- A resident noted that there used to be a railroad stop on Bridge Street and mentioned that they had heard of a stop being developed but acknowledged that there was no train currently making the stop.
- Another resident agreed that this segment of road is difficult to cycle through and supported extending the sidewalk on the east side of Bridge Street and then further south to Jolina Court. They also acknowledged that traffic hadn't been a problem during COVID but in the past the northbound direction has been congested by school traffic (parents dropping off, etc.).
- One resident said that they live on West Main St and that their children often bike down to the park which they don't feel safe with them doing on the road. They said their children ride on an unmarked path that goes between houses from W. Main Street to Depot Street in order to avoid Bridge Street. While acknowledging that it is private land, they said they chose to bike there instead of on sidewalks or behind cars which they find to be frightening. They supported some type of cycling infrastructure on the shoulder and expressed distaste for reverse-in parking in order to accomplish this. They also inquired about bump-outs based on a previous idea for the street.
- One of the panelists asked where those bump-outs would have been placed, to which the resident responded that they believed it would have been across from TD Bank, and something like large barrels or planters (such as those in the quick-build guide for Burlington) and also discussed street trees and/or stormwater infiltration systems.
- A resident noted that there were few places available for bicycle parking, and said that there is one spot, but requested more in the future.
- One resident interjected, noting that the earlier study done on bump outs was conducted with Local Motion. They then went on to say that the section of the sidewalk in front of Cumberland Farms is not a delineated sidewalk which makes it a dangerous segment, as there is a lot of vehicle traffic.
- One panelist asked how residents feel about mid-street crossing along this stretch of Bridge Street.
- A resident said that when coming from Pleasant Street there is no way to cross or sidewalks to take in order to get to a crossing unless one walks through the TD Bank parking lot.
- Another resident agreed, adding that the south end of the Bridge Street block, at the intersection of Pleasant and Depot Street, is the place they most see people crossing outside of the crosswalks, and after that it would be from the Greensea parking lot to the bike shop and Sweet Simone's.



- Another resident said they don't think one crosswalk is enough, but that there can be too many.
- A panelist asked if the current location of the crosswalk is in the right spot.
- A resident disagreed, saying that they don't think there's a place to go from there and that sidewalks are needed on the east side regardless of where the crossing is. The resident then remarked that the informal path between Depot and W. Main Street is fine to use for residents, as the owners of the property has permitted its use.
- A panelist asked if there was a reason why the crossing was placed there and inquired as to whom it may serve.
- One resident said the crossing was placed there simply because that is the end of the sidewalk on the east side of the road.
- Another resident chimed in, saying that they think the crossing needs to be further down on Bridge Street but prior to the bank redeveloping their parking lot there were steps that lead to the old crosswalk.
- A business owner said they would be interested in the on-street parking spots in front of the shops being 90 degree parking instead of angled parking so people could access from both sides. They cited the angled parking as a deterrent for people driving northbound to park at their business, and that an increase in parking would be welcomed.
- A resident said that they were not sure exactly where a mid-street crossing would be best, and would like to have additional parking developed in the lot behind what is now Spruce (a restaurant) or behind 27 Bridge St.
- A business owner advocated for bike parking so cyclists would not lean their bikes up against windows. They also advocated for additional outdoor dining space, especially with the current dining restrictions. They cited videos of cities with on-street parking being blocked off in order to create an outdoor dining space. The owner then talked about agreement with employees to not park in front of businesses and use the Depot Street parking lot instead.
- One resident questioned if the business owner would like to see parallel parking on the east side of Bridge Street.
- The owner responded that they wouldn't change the number of spots currently on the west side but spots similar to those in front of Richmond dental would be good on the east side of the street.
- The resident responded that there is probably not room in order to accommodate parking on both sides and asked if having the spots as they currently are on the west side was an acceptable tradeoff for having spots on the east side.
- The owner answered that they would rather keep more spots, even if it has to be on one side.
- A panelist asked if there were any agreements with businesses to use parking spots after hours.
- The business owner answered that parking behind Greensea is public but was unsure if there's an agreement with TD Bank. They cited that it was used after hours anyway. Between business owners there are agreements to ask employees to park elsewhere.

***Bridge Street Intersection with Jolina Court / Railroad Street***

- One Resident noted that from Richmond Dental to Richmond Market, the only pedestrian infrastructure is the striped walk, which can get worn or become obsolete under snow. They also said that the crosswalk is not well



lit, poorly delineated, and rather 'wiggly,' citing the entire intersection as confusing for both drivers and pedestrians to determine who has the right of way and when the pedestrian should begin to cross. The resident noted the lack of adequate signage, such as an RRFB (a pedestrian crossing sign which uses flashing lights to signal drivers).

- Another resident agreed with the lack of delineated space, asking if the sidewalk could be extended up to the railroad gates and signals, which would help add more dedicated space for pedestrians and bring the crosswalk closer to the market.
- A resident on the transportation committee specified that the crosswalk was not intended to be a sidewalk but given the constraints at the time of its installation, it is the sidewalk. The resident then noted the increase in trips to and from Jolina Court as it becomes more developed, and requested a sidewalk along the east side of Bridge Street to facilitate those residents.
- One resident asked why there are no stop signs at this intersection.
- Another resident noted the added complexity of the railroad tracks being in this location.
- A resident noted that businesses in this area (i.e. Richmond Home Supply) have large truck deliveries and checking with the owner may be prudent to better understand the vehicles needing to access Railroad Street at this intersection.
- One resident expressed support for a pedestrian refuge and pointed to the right-of-way in the presentation to note that there was limited space to the west to implement the changes being discussed in the meeting. The resident also remarked on the difficulty of making a left onto Railroad Street when travelling northbound on a bike.
- Another resident agreed with the previous comment about the turning while cycling, citing their experience from the north was also challenging due to the railroad tracks and speeding cars.

***Bridge Street Intersection with Huntington Road / Cochran Road / Thompson Road***

- One resident of Thompson Road spoke of a lack of sight lines for cars and that as a pedestrian there is a fair chance a car will not stop for them. They also pointed to a lack of sidewalks on the south side of Huntington Road. They acknowledged that they occasionally use the road in front of the Round Church order to cut through that area safely.
- Another resident agreed with the above statement, saying that they live on Cochran Road. They noted an increase in cars travelling straight from Huntington Road to Cochran Road, where before the traffic turned to Bridge Street, due to the year-round ski mountain attractions. They expressed their support of a 4-way stop at this intersection with crosswalks on each approach.
- A resident pointed to the width of the intersection, specifically the danger of the right turn from Bridge Street to Huntington Road.
- One resident asked about a roundabout at this location, but upon further reflection thought that the existing right-of-way might not be enough.
- A resident noted a trail head further down on Huntington Road which increases bicycle and pedestrian traffic to and from that location.



- Another resident agreed, saying that if cyclists come off of the trail they would be on a blind curve, but was unsure if this was part of the study for this meeting.
- One resident said that rather than extend the existing sidewalk to the north to reach the trail, they would rather prioritize a sidewalk on the south side of Huntington Road, saying that they go to the Stone Corral.
- A resident said that there are condominiums on Farr Road and residents of Thompson Road that would be capable of walking between Huntington Road and their homes, but from their perspective improvements to intersection should be the priority.
- One resident noted a steady stream of traffic on Huntington Road, especially when school is starting in the morning, and a general lack of traffic on Thompson Road with the exception of the Town Highway Garage. They said Cochran Road traffic is variable, especially since COVID, as the number of cyclists have increased on that road.
- Another resident agreed, saying that bicyclists heading down Cochran Road go through the Round Church and tend to avoid the intersection. When approaching from Huntington Road, the resident said the bikers typically shoot across the intersection.
- Another resident agreed with the previous comment about using Round Church Rd and said they use the crosswalk on Bridge Street just north of the intersection to cut through.
- A resident felt that Bridge St wasn't wide enough for bicyclist which meant that some bicyclist chose to ride on the sidewalk, making it difficult for pedestrians who try to get out of their way only to be obstructed by a stone wall. Cyclists who chose to ride on the road fear for their safety and then look over their shoulder while they ride.

### Next Steps

- The panelists wrapped up the meeting by listing the next steps for the project. They stated that the project team is targeting March 2021 for draft alternatives to bring back to the community for discussion.

### Chat Comments

Key: Underlined notes below were copied and pasted from the Zoom chat. Names were removed.

From [panelist] to Everyone: 07:17 PM

You can use the chat feature here as well!

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:21 PM

I can't stay for whole meeting but I wonder about preparing for Richmond to be a light rail stop.

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:45 PM

I think the mid-block crossing in front of the bakery is well placed for "mid-block" as it serves all of the Bridge Street Businesses from a central point and helps south-bound pedestrians from Main to avoid Cumbies. Considering an additional crossing on the south side of Pleasant to Depot would be good for north-bound pedestrians to Bridge

Place: Bridge Street Local Concerns Public Meeting  
Ref: 58538.00  
December 10, 2020  
Page 6



## Meeting Notes

Street businesses as well as south-bound to the market, library, etc.

I support Lisa's point re: parking. Solutions that eliminate downtown parking should be avoided if possible.

From [resident] to Everyone: 07:54 PM

We're walking :)

Losing spots in the West side would be challenging, especially for Bridge Street Hair and Food Bank customers.

From [resident] to Everyone: 08:31 PM

Thank you

From [panelist] to Everyone: 08:31 PM

project webpage: <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/transportation/current-projects/corridors-circulation/bridge-street-complete-streets-corridor-study/>