

**Richmond Bike, Walk, and Trails Plan
Project Steering Committee****MEETING #2 NOTES**

Wednesday, February 10, 2020, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82283641539?pwd=ZXIUVU13cVNsaEVqWFJ5K0pNdXg4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 822 8364 1539 | Passcode: 608384

Call in: (929) 205-6099

INVITED

Steering Committee: Jean Bressor (Trails Committee), Justin Graham (RiseVT), Colin Green, Chase Rosenberg (Trails Committee), Ian Stokes (Richmond Climate Action Committee), Jonathon Weber (Local Motion), James Floyd (Transportation Committee), Allen Knowles (Transportation Committee), Samantha Peikes

Town of Richmond: Ravi Venkataraman

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC): Bryan Davis, Marshall Distel

Toole Design: Kristen Lohse, Lily Ko

AGENDA

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| 1. Welcome and Introductions | Ravi Venkataraman | 6:30 pm |
| 2. Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items | | 6:35 |
| 3. Update on Project Schedule | Kristen Lohse | 6:45 |
| 4. Discussion: Review and discuss draft vision statement, solicit input on draft project goals | All | 6:50 |
| 5. Presentation: What have we learned to date? Review input and highlights of existing conditions assessment | Kristen Lohse and Bryan Davis | 7:10 |
| 6. Discussion/brainstorm: Review opportunities and constraints, share and discuss of initial focus ideas | All | 7:30 |
| 7. Next Steps | Kristen Lohse | 7:50 |
| 8. Adjourn | | 8:00 |

Attendance

- **Steering Committee**
 - Ian Stokes, Richmond Climate Action Committee
 - Jean Bressor, Trails Committee
 - James Floyd, Transportation Committee
 - Jonathan Weber, Local Motion
 - Justin Graham, RiseVT
 - Allen Knowles, Transportation Committee
 - Chase Rosenberg, Trails Committee
- **Public**
 - Greg Western, Cross Vermont Trail
 - Trum Rittling, avid bicyclist
 - Mary Houle, Richmond landowner/resident
- **Planning Team**
 - Ravi Venkataraman, Town of Richmond
 - Bryan Davis, CCRPC
 - Marshall Distel, CCRPC
 - Kristen Lohse, Toole Design
 - Lily Ko, Toole Design

Schedule Update

- A little behind schedule
 - Wanted to wrap up by end of summer, but might push a little into Fall
- Plan to convene committee again by end of Spring

Draft Vision Statement

- Framework helps us with whether the plan is really meeting the framework, prioritization of projects, meeting values of the community
- Ian suggested changing the second bullet under the climate adaptive goal to:
“Encourage people to choose active transportation and multi-modal travel by making them easier to use.” Or similar
- Chase: a month of good snow cover so far – made clear a whole new network of neighborhood trails that are connected to each other – a whole new lens on secondary pathway use that seems worth keeping in the background, especially with outdoor recreation seeing a big growth spurt this year
- Jonathan: winter maintenance - we’re going to maintain what we build in Richmond
- Kristen: keep both seasonal adaptations and maintenance in mind
- Ian: climate adaptive – goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has to be related to state goals
 - Can we integrate that quantitatively and relate to state goals, which are quantitative?
 - Richmond should be participating in that process
 - Next stage in vision and goals would be coming up with metrics we can use to track progress over time and ensure plan will be implemented
 - So we can have a metric that is reducing a % of vehicle trips
 - Need to think about how that data will be captured – but great idea to get specific
- Jonathan: can we be more explicit about making the village center a place that is safe/welcoming so that people get there (economic opportunities) and spend more time there
 - Bring vibrance to village
- Chase: are we working with Bridge St team?
 - No – but we will coordinate where we can
- Chase: Should we advocate for new development permits including climate-forward accommodations for alternative transportation parking and charging? Is that in the purview of our plan? E.g., any future

development should have X number of electric vehicle charging stations and covered bicycle parking. Ian adds: I understand it is being considered seriously by the Planning Commission (via Zoning regulations).

- Jean: Connected – forging opportunities with whatever is the area and connecting with that infrastructure
- Jonathan: something really effective in South Burlington – they have walk/bike committee – very effective to give feedback during development process – that’s how they’ve built out a lot of their multiuse paths
 - Can we have a committee that gives input into development decisions
 - Kristen: It can be tough if the committee doesn’t have the teeth to enforce things – but best possible thing if they get the information when there’s still a chance to influence the outcome
- Mary: Rules are spelled out in Zoning, but Selectboard can and has waived rules, e.g., sidewalk requirements for developers
 - No matter what you put into the rule, the Selectboard can waive them
 - Looking back on it, the cost of fixing the issue is going to be more expensive than what it would have cost if they just enforced the rule
 - I hope charging stations are not going to be free – I do not want to be paying someone else to be charging their vehicles powered by a coal plant somewhere
- Chase: hung up on economic opportunities – is that in our mission? Are we promoting growth or access?
 - Maybe more economic “health” than opportunity
 - Do we want this place to be a destination for people? Do we want it to be a place that accommodates big groups from other cities? Mass tourism? I don’t feel like we can advocate for that for the whole town. We don’t currently have the infrastructure to accommodate that, even from a trails maintenance standpoint.
 - Doesn’t need to be in mission statement

Existing Conditions

- How can we make the connections without losing the rural character?
- Future Land Use – would be useful to highlight these on a map
- **Need to define upland:** Upland: an area of high or hilly land. In this guide, uplands are distinguished from the lowlands which are the valleys, meadows, and floodplains that surround rivers, lakes, or wetlands. From Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (<https://anr.vermont.gov/sites/anr/files/maps/bio-finder/MVNH-Glossary.pdf>)
- Roads are quite narrow, there’s not as much flexibility with what we can do with the space
- Missing from points of interest – Village, neighborhoods
 - What are the islands we need to connect? There are some obvious, e.g., Village and Park and Ride, or Village – Park and Ride – Schools – but what other ones?
 - James: Cochran
 - Chase:
 - Southview Hidden Pines (north of school) - Walking into town from there involves being on a busy road – no sidewalk past the elementary school (sidewalk ends at the school) – kids can’t walk to school even if they live a mile away
 - Park and ride – getting to Village is prohibitively dangerous
 - Andrews Community Forest – connect with Whitcomb Farm/VYCC (Mary: I think this is Zen Wheeler’s farm, not Whitcomb Farm)
 - These all get back to Route 2 corridor
 - Jonathan: Riverview Commons
 - Area off River Rd – connect them to school, Park and Ride, improving walking access to gas station and mart on 117
 - Mary: there was a concerted effort after a young child was abducted that no child will be required to walk to school, that every child will be picked up by a bus or by a parent
 - There are safety issues beyond paths and sidewalks
 - Kristen: we need to account for parents who walk with their kids
 - James: kids are currently walking but it’s just a matter of making it safer for them

- Ian: we don't have a sense of traffic (counts) currently – but Ravi put into a document – Montpelier, Burlington, Essex are large destinations – how we can increase mixed use
 - Points to park and ride and accessibility to it – for commuters – as high priority
 - What are the transportation conditions in terms of how many people are traveling and for what purpose? How much of this data is available for Richmond?
 - Bryan: We will look at what data we have available. We have turning movement counts and speeds intersections across the county
 - Kristen: sometimes it's more fruitful to focus on those short trips
 - They might feel more accessible than commutes
 - E.g., trip to library with kid – might feel more accessible
 - Ian: but increasing access to park and ride has the potential to have a huge impact. Park and ride capacity - often full (pre-pandemic) – also can't be expanded because of flood zone problem
 - My opinion is that park and ride should be very high priority
 - Kristen: we can think about how to make it more attractive, e.g., covered bike parking
 - Ian: having a bike rack on the bus is helpful too
 - Opportunity for mixed-mode travel – we don't have to ride our bikes all the way to Burlington – we can put it on the bus

Public Input / Wikimap

- Bryan gave an overview of the major destinations, barriers and connections heard from the public.
- Mary: appreciate point on conserved land access because this is public money was used
- Chase: need to think about snow storage – because they can take away shoulders or bike lanes
 - Kristen: yes, some communities make a commitment to move snow off-site
 - Bryan: if there's no greenbelt, there's no storage space. Sometimes, people end up plowing back and forth between roadway and sidewalk
- Allen: line along river from Volunteers Green to around the bend to where it is very close to Route 2
 - Referred to Route 2 Path Study. Bryan adds: VTrans did some research and the railroad right of way (ROW) takes precedence over the highway ROW (they overlap near the village). And they (RR) typically say no to any path within their ROW. We also asked RR to consider a tunnel near the village but didn't get a response. See study pdf pg 15.
 - Also: what is extent of potential railroad path to consider? Current opportunities map has it from NW border to Bridge St (did not put it farther SE because railroad tracks run south of I-89 and there are few/no crossing opportunities to get to neighborhoods on north side). Bryan adds: Would be neat to have a connection from PnR all the way to Jonesville, but it looks like there would be some significant challenges, so NW border/PnR to Bridge St makes sense.

Opportunities and Constraints

- NW-SE connection along Main St between Park and Ride and town border
- Making sure people can walk from Village to schools
- Wayfinding on roads where facilities may be difficult to install
- Out of the box opportunities to explore
 - Quick-build solutions / pilot projects
 - Works as proof of concept strategy
 - Are there pilot projects that we can explore that just get people thinking whether something is possible?
- Anything else we should be thinking of? Comments?
 - Allen Knowles: Bridge St is wicked if you're trying to walk/bike it! Lack of ability to expand and need for parking by businesses
 - Needs signs for “bicycles may use full lane” – not just sharrows

- People come around corner from Route 2, speeding – you have to be nimble to cross Bridge St – just south of Main St
 - Distance is so short; cars are on you by the time they see you
- Needs 15 mph speed limit
- Wish it could have speed bumps – but considering emergency access, probably not possible
- But traffic calming needed!
- Take 15 mph all the way across the bridge
- People are trying to get to Volunteers Green
- Kristen to Allen: Route 2 – what does traffic volume feel like?
 - East of Bridge St – traffic is much less
 - West toward I-89 interchange – that's usually where the jam is
 - Tenant a few houses down that's 80 yrs. old and manages to cross the street to get to her mailbox
 - People don't feel sidewalks are safe for kids, because people pull off and park on side of road and halfway strike asphalt
 - State said they were going to redo the sidewalks in 2017, but still haven't yet
- Jonathan: can you find just 5 feet for bike lane on Jericho on uphill side? It's still pretty low comfort, but still would be an improvement
- Chase: Jericho Rd above Southview – really common running route – people use it as a way to connect to other neighborhoods (e.g., Southview to Mary Pines?)
 - It is hard to see the runners – it would be worth putting the lane along the whole stretch to the town line
- James: Andrews Forest is relatively new to Richmond
 - How can we access it from the center of Richmond?
 - Better access from Village to Andrews Forest – sidewalk (only about a mile)
- Chase: significant trail development plan this summer in Andrews – connecting over top of ridge to Sunshine trails – will start to see increasing traffic
 - Will get more developed, even though it's under the radar right now, in coming years, will expand
 - VAST trail between Snipe Ireland and Jericho Roads not heavily used now. Not snowmobile trail anymore – but still an open path. Bryan adds: Maybe this map is helpful? See object ID 1974634. I also see the closed section in Richmond on this map: <https://vtvast.org/trails.html>
 - No formal agreement down to elementary school or park and ride from VAST trail – would have to get under interstate. Bryan adds: I don't see a public input connection from VAST to school or PnR. Going under I-89 on Jericho Rd seems like best way to get to school. To get to PnR from VAST trail near Gov Peck Rd doesn't seem easy – would likely involve navigating the ramps at Exit 11.
 - Is there a place that people use to park snowmobiles? No, the path is used very much because it's a dead end
 - Mary: a few years where there wasn't not sufficient snow to allow snowmobile traffic; opportunity for vast trail is not gone, but there were a few years where it wasn't a viable option given the lack of snow
 - Between Snipe and Jericho, Not snowmobile trail anymore – but still an open path
 - Is it an easement, not actual trail – need to learn more about it – can it be a seasonal path? Is it an actual sanctioned trail? Who owns it? Ravi to check.
 - Sip of Sunshine Loop Trail –is there any other info about this, or any GIS for data? Bryan add: Maybe this map is helpful? See object ID 1970559

Wrap-Up

- Public meeting: Week of March 15
 - Will share some initial recommendations – not final, but enough to have a conversation

- Maybe breakout rooms
 - Steering committee can help facilitate conversations
- Then will prioritize projects based on feedback