

# RECONNECT JACKSON WARD

## Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program Grant Application

### PREPARED FOR:

United States Department  
of Transportation  
FY 2022 RCP Grant Application

### SUBMITTED BY:

City of Richmond, Virginia



### SUBMITTED IN COORDINATION WITH:



# City of Richmond



LEVAR M. STONEY  
MAYOR

October 3, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
120 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

**Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As Mayor of the City of Richmond, VA, I am pleased to express my full support for our Office of Equitable Development's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program – Planning Grant application to support our continued efforts to reconnect our historic Jackson Ward neighborhood. During the 1950s, the City of Richmond fell casualty to the U.S. Interstate Highway System, which further resulted in the crippling and bifurcation of Jackson Ward—an area once known as the Harlem of the South. Upon completion of the interstate, much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined, particularly north of the interstate. As we work diligently to right the wrongs of years of racist policies, our efforts to reconnect Jackson Ward have been intentional, ensuring that current and future plans do not have a myopic perspective regarding community needs and innovation.

If awarded, this planning grant would assist Richmond in developing detailed design documents for our Reconnect Jackson Ward project to advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street for spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. Funds will aid this effort by assisting with conducting historical research, environmental assessments, traffic impact analyses, and continued community engagement.

Due to decades of economic injustice, many residents have found it hard to trust the administrative process and often feel voiceless in the city's decisions. As a result, it is an ongoing effort of my administration to engage with residents to rebuild this trust meaningfully. In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive place, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are attainable for all Richmonders.

# City of Richmond



Our Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, which became a byproduct of the construction of the interstate, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed-use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

On behalf of the City of Richmond, we are thankful for this opportunity. Elevating, connecting, and amplifying the importance of nurturing communities negatively impacted by historic policies is of the utmost importance. Through these funds, we will be able to actualize this goal, further restoring pride to our Jackson Ward residents. We thank you in advance for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. M. Stoney", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Levar M. Stoney  
Mayor

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**A. Overview..... 1**

    A.1 Introduction ..... 1

    A.2 Barriers and Background..... 2

    A.3 History and Character of the Community ..... 3

    A.4 Other Background Information ..... 4

**B. Location & Map..... 4**

**C. Response to Merit Criteria ..... 5**

    C.1 Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement..... 5

    C.2 Mobility and Community Connectivity ..... 7

    C.3 Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships ..... 8

    C.4 Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity..... 9

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: Budget**

**APPENDIX B: Endorsement Letters**

**APPENDIX C: Feasibility Study**

## A. Overview

### A.1 Introduction

The City of Richmond is seeking \$1.69M in Planning Grant funding for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project to improve access and reconnect Jackson Ward, a historic African American community that was physically and economically separated by the construction of Interstates 95 and 64 (I-95/64) in the 1950s. Born out of the City's master plan, [Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth](#), the Reconnect Jackson Ward project provides a unique opportunity to rebuild and reknit the history and culture of Jackson Ward, while physically reconnecting both sides of the interstate, through the creation of a new bridge or freeway lid that would incorporate transportation connections, public spaces, and opportunities for future development in the City of Richmond, Virginia. The Reconnect Jackson Ward Project is also included in the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization's [ConnectRVA 2045](#) Vision Plan.

In January 2022, in collaborative partnership with the Virginia Secretary of Transportation's Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the City of Richmond embarked on the [Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study](#), a community-driven process to identify solutions for restoring community connectivity between Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods north and south of the interstate. The feasibility study included multiple public information meetings, pop-up events, surveys, and focus groups, intended on providing the public with an opportunity to help guide the decision-making process and ensure that any future project responds to the needs of the community. The study identified where it would be technically possible to implement a new bridge or freeway lid (see **Figure 1**) and included recommendations for careful continued community engagement and

additional studies and analyses that will be needed to advance a successful project.

The City of Richmond requests the assistance of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to continue the planning activities necessary to advance the design, evaluate the potential impacts, and identify a project for reconnecting Jackson Ward that is fiscally feasible, while achieving the goals of restoring community connectivity and improving the lives of Jackson Ward residents as well as the City as a whole. These activities are needed to successfully advance the development of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project towards future next steps and implementation and include:

- Preliminary engineering and design utilizing designers with experience designing Black spaces;
- Environmental assessment and traffic impact analysis;
- Local history and culture archival research to inform community sensitive design as well as impact analyses;
- Philanthropic coordination; and
- Continued community engagement and related activities.



During his visit to Jackson Ward with Senator Kaine, Representatives Spanberger and Donald, former Virginia Governor, City of Richmond Mayor, and Richmond's Office of Equitable Development Deputy Director, Secretary Pete Buttigieg stated: *"What you see in Jackson Ward is how transportation dollars sometimes serve to disconnect and we have a chance to do something about that; it's what the Reconnecting Communities Program is all about. Transportation should always be about connecting and never about dividing and today was a great example of a proud community with a rich heritage that deserves our support."*

### A.2 Barriers and Background

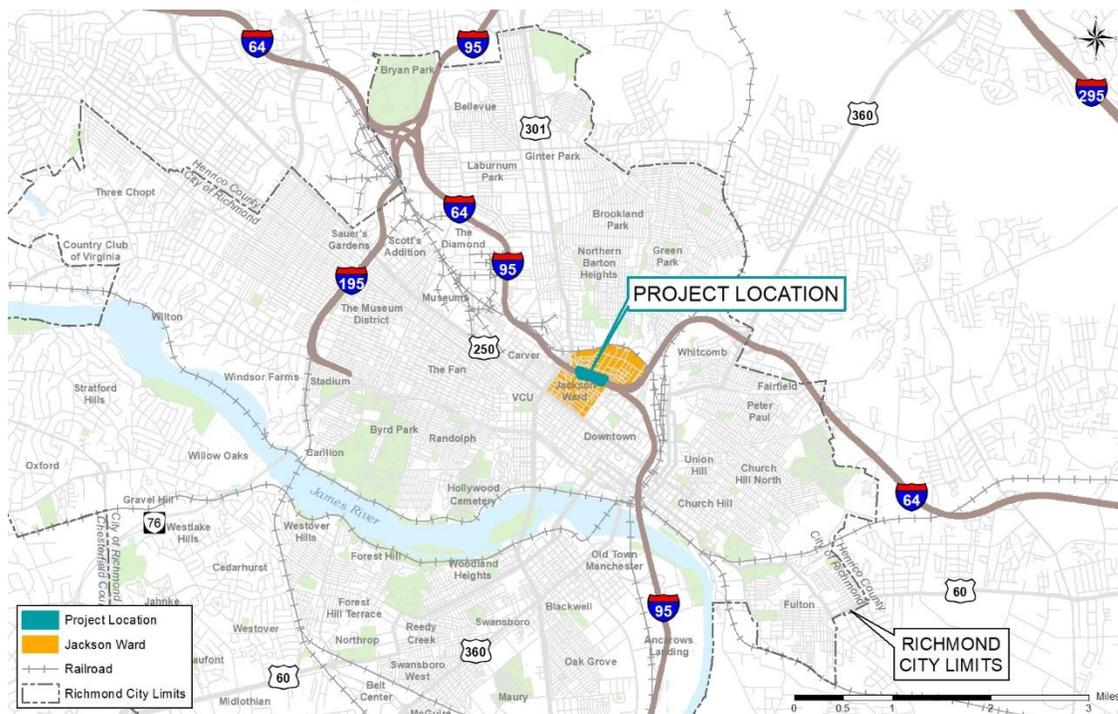
In 1954, despite objections from residents, the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike began. Opened in 1958, the facility was designated I-95/64 and resulted in the removal of more than 1,000 homes and businesses, displacing 7,000 residents. Among the displaced included approximately 10 percent of the City of Richmond’s total African American population, many of which resided in the Jackson Ward neighborhood, which was a hub of African American commerce and culture. The physical separation of Jackson Ward, caused by the interstate, was significant. For the area south of the interstate, there was still relatively easy access to the city and its downtown center. The area north of the interstate was physically and visually cut off from the more active downtown commercial districts in the city, which had traditionally sustained it. For both areas, continued disinvestment and demolition followed.

Currently, the area north of I-95/64 is bound by the existing railroad and interstate facility and functions as an island (see **Figure 1**). Gilpin



*Aerial view of construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike*

Court, the city’s largest public housing development, is located in this island. The City and the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority are currently developing a community plan for the redevelopment of Gilpin Court. The plan is funded by a HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. Creating better connections to and from Gilpin Court is critical to leverage downtown growth and expand market opportunities for this part of Jackson Ward.



**Figure 1. Project Location**

### A.3 History and Character of the Community

In 1871, Jackson Ward was established as a new sixth voting district within the City of Richmond, specifically designated to include a majority of Richmond’s African American population. Restrictive laws and regulations made it difficult for African American residents to find opportunities outside of the Jackson Ward community; however, the area became one of the most vibrant Black cultural and business centers in the United States. Jackson Ward became its own city within Richmond, full of business and commercial activities, churches, theaters, and other cultural establishments, which were formed and run by Black residents. In the 1920s, Jackson Ward was known as both the “Harlem of the South” and the “Black Wall Street.” By the 1930s, there were more than 8,000 African Americans living, working, and thriving in Jackson Ward.

Jackson Ward for clearance and construction of its first public housing development. Expanded in 1957 and 1970, the Gilpin Court complex remains the City of Richmond’s largest and oldest public housing community, bereft of landscaping, community amenities, natural features and representative of the neighborhood’s historic disenfranchisement.

Demographic data compiled for Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods illustrates the notable contrast between the two sides of the community that are separated by I-95/64, as shown in **Figure 2**. Despite similar populations and number of households, compared to the area south of the interstate, the area north of the interstate has less than half of the percentage of people in the labor force, more than double the unemployment rate, more than double the percentage of households below the poverty level, the median household income is nearly one third, and the Walk Score is less than half that of the southern portion. This data illustrates the economic isolation of the community to the north, which has been physically separated from resources and economic access compared to the area to the south. It also emphasizes the importance of the opportunity offered by the Reconnect Jackson Ward project to rebuild and reknit this community.

While the Jackson Ward community prospered, numerous political and social restrictions were put in place through the 1930s to further segregate and isolate African Americans, including voting restrictions intended to suppress black political power, and redlining to confine African Americans to segregated and deteriorating areas. Under the Housing Act of 1937, the City of Richmond selected an area known as Apostle Town in the north side of

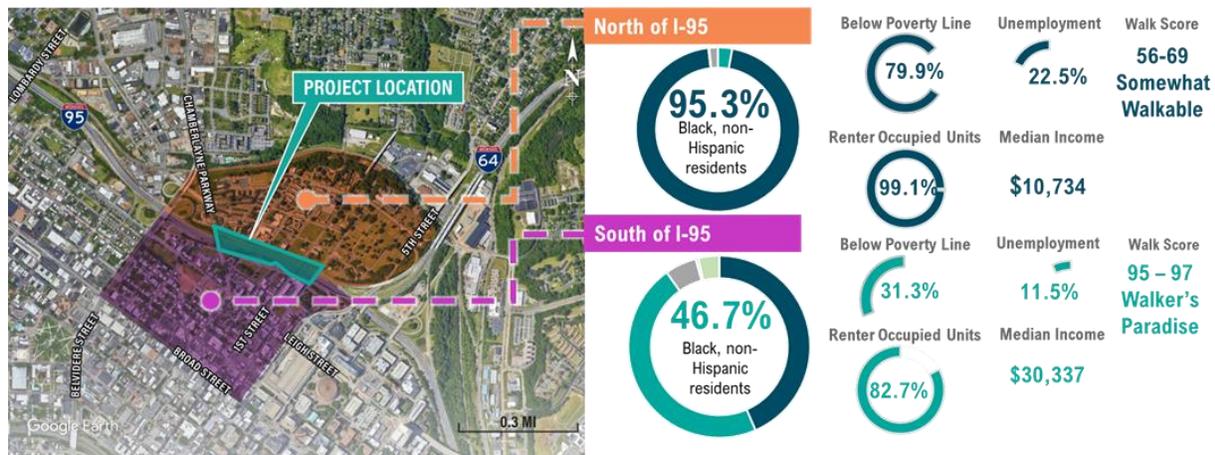


Figure 2. Community Profile

#### A.4 Other Background Information

The City of Richmond is requesting \$1.69 million in Planning Grant funding, which represents approximately 80 percent of the estimated costs associated with the proposed activities necessary to advance the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. The remaining 20 percent will be funded through local or regional funding provided by the City of Richmond or through in-kind contributions. A project budget, describing the proposed planning activities and anticipated funding requirements is included as an appendix to this application narrative (see **Appendix A**).

As part of the planning and design for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, opportunities for synergies with other ongoing efforts within the project vicinity will be evaluated to ensure the most beneficial outcomes for the Jackson Ward community and City of Richmond as a whole. There are a number of projects currently planned or underway in Jackson Ward which represent opportunities to improve the overall community. A number of these projects are highlighted in the location map that follows (see **Figure 3**).

Most notably, the City of Richmond is undertaking the [Jackson Ward Community Plan](#), funded through a Choice Neighborhood grant provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This community planning process for Jackson Ward is evaluating strategies to create a shared vision for Jackson Ward's future and the transformation of the Gilpin Court complex, the

oldest and largest public housing development in Richmond. The Jackson Ward Community Plan will focus on providing equitable and affordable housing opportunities within Jackson Ward, which was expressed by the community through the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study as one of their more prominent concerns.

Additional planning and design is needed to ensure that the Reconnect Jackson Ward project synchronously aligns with the Jackson Ward Community Plan as well as other ongoing projects within the vicinity, which include:

- *Fall Line Trail*: A 43-mile multi-use trail that is planned to connect seven localities, including the City of Richmond, and has the potential to greatly increase active transportation access and networks in the region as well as within Jackson Ward;
- *North-South Bus Rapid Transit*: The Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) is currently evaluating the expansion of the City of Richmond's bus rapid transit (BRT) route to provide service to sections of the city along a north-south corridor, currently aligned adjacent to the Reconnect Jackson Ward project area on Belvidere Street; and
- *Belvidere Street Interchange Realignment and Safety Improvements*: VDOT is advancing efforts to rebuild and potentially realign the Belvidere Street interchange to address existing safety and operational issues on I-95/64 and the arterial network.

## B. Location & Map

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is in Richmond, Virginia, the state capital. The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study identified a potential five-acre area between Chamberlayne Parkway and N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, within which a bridge structure or freeway lid could be implemented over I-95/64. Through the public engagement process supporting the feasibility study, the community identified conceptual themes and amenities to be included in a future

connection to capture Jackson Ward's community vision. **Figure 3** illustrates the project location where the City of Richmond is seeking assistance to advance additional planning and design efforts to develop a project. The project will include important thematic design elements and recommendations that were identified in the feasibility study and reflect on the past, present, and future of the community as a way of commemorating and reviving Black

excellence and ownership in Jackson Ward. The figure also shows the inventory of existing transportation infrastructure within the study area and highlights areas with sidewalks.

Several GRTC bus lines run through the area, servicing the 22 bus stops shown on the figure. The figure also shows the ongoing transportation projects noted above.

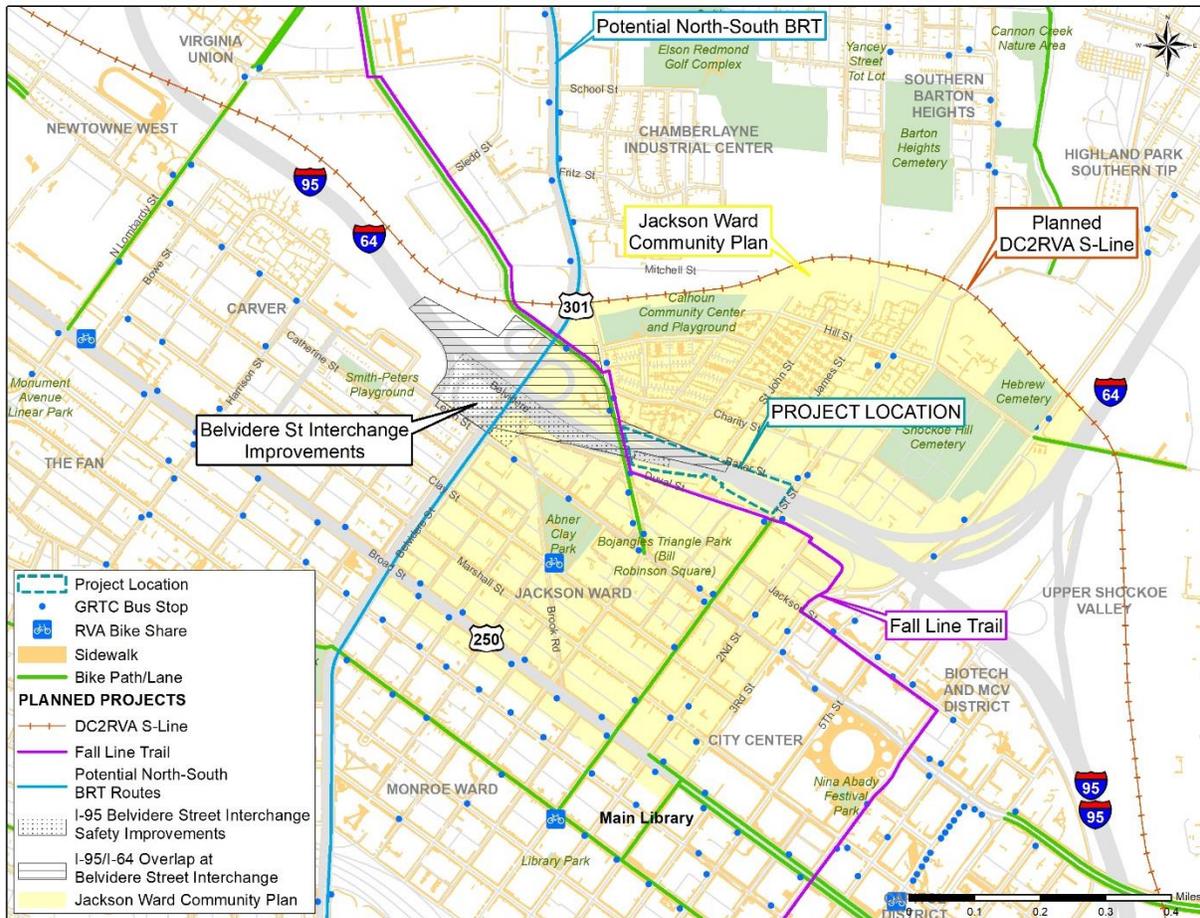


Figure 3. Project Location and Existing/Planned Transportation

### C. Response to Merit Criteria

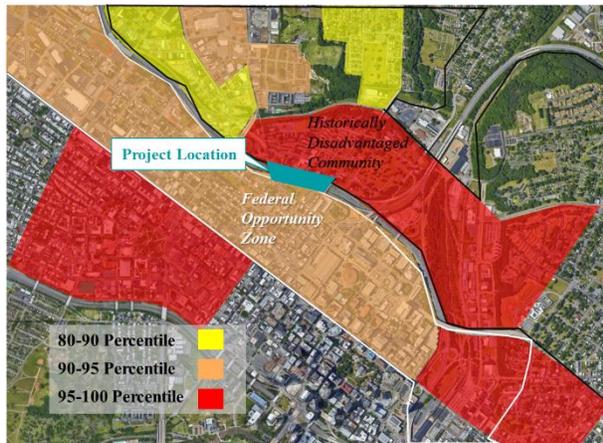
#### C.1 Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement

**Socioeconomic Disparities and Needs of the Surrounding Community** – The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study includes documentation of the history and analysis of the notable existing socioeconomic disparities within Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods (see **Figure 2**). The study included a robust community-driven process that supports these findings of apparent segregation caused by the existing interstate facility. The community outreach effort associated with the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study resulted in engagement with

over 300 community members over a six-month period that helped identify the need for future improvements to address past harms against the African American community that were displaced by the highway project that bifurcated the Jackson Ward neighborhood.

As described in Section A.3 of this application, Jackson Ward has been the subject of many harmful historic policies including redlining which barred access to financing for housing or businesses; gerrymandering voting districts and the State’s change in the Constitution causing voter suppression, showing a drop in voters

from 6,427 in 1900 to 760 in 1902; HUD's and RRHA's attempt to improve living conditions which resulted in the displacement of the majority of residents in the section of Jackson Ward north of I-95/64; and finally, the decision to construct a new six-lane highway through the middle of the Jackson Ward community, destroying more than 1,000 homes and businesses and displacing 7,000 residents. The socioeconomic disparities resulting from the physical separation of the Jackson Ward community are also illustrated by an analysis of the US EPA's [EJSCREEN](#), which identifies the census block groups comprising Jackson Ward among the 90-95<sup>th</sup> percentile, compared to state indicators for low-income populations. Additionally, the area north of I-95/64 is an area of persistent poverty that has been designated by the USDOT as an Historically Disadvantaged Community and the area south of I-95/64, also an area of persistent poverty, is designated as a Federal Opportunity Zone (see **Figure 4**).



**Figure 4.** USEPA EJSCREEN, Historically Disadvantaged Communities, and Federal Opportunity Zones

As identified in FHWA's Screening Tool for Equity Analysis of Projects (STEAP), Black persons comprise 60 percent of the population within 0.5 miles of the project location, which represents an approximate 15 to 20-minute walkshed. Additionally, 59 percent of the households earn less than \$25,000 per year, 52 percent of the population lives in poverty, and 43 percent of the households do not own

vehicles. Constructing a bridge structure or freeway lid in this area would equitably distribute benefits by allowing disadvantaged persons better access to both sides of the neighborhood, while also allowing all Richmonders increased access to new mixed-income businesses and community gathering spaces.

The community-driven Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study included multiple opportunities for outreach and public involvement, including coordination with a steering committee represented by residents, descendants, and business owners; public information meetings; focus groups; pop-up events to meet residents in their neighborhoods; one-on-one interviews; employment of community ambassadors to act as neighborhood liaisons to engage the community and encourage public participation; community surveys, available online and hard copy at the public information meetings and pop-up events; social media; email blasts; newspaper articles; and doorhangers. Through these efforts, not only were the socioeconomic disparities within Jackson Ward enumerated but a shared vision for a future reconnection was identified. Through the variety of outreach and engagement events conducted over the course of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study process, community members identified a number of community needs:

- More connections between the north and south sides of the Jackson Ward community to improve mobility between the two separated areas.
- A place to celebrate history, arts, and culture amenities that reflect the African American experience.
- Mixed-use/mixed-income commercial and housing opportunities as well as controls to protect against gentrification and further displacement, as well as the potential for reparations to address past harms.

**Community Participation Plan** – Community engagement and outreach activities will continue to be a critical component of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. If awarded the Planning Grant, the City will develop a Community Participation Plan that builds upon the engagement that was performed for the feasibility study and will continue through planning, design, construction, and operations. This plan will also identify how to coordinate with other studies making other related land use decisions. Through previous community engagement efforts, pop-up events were identified as particularly effective in reaching local residents. Similar events, as well as public open houses and focus groups, with the addition of childcare components, will be included in future community engagement efforts to encourage more participation. Additionally, the plan will include community surveys, continuance of the ambassador program where local residents are compensated to attend events and encourage participation in the study, in-person and virtual events, and identification of the need for outreach material or engagement in different languages, for those with limited English proficiency.

Data from the STEAP report notes that 18 percent of households do not have computers

## C.2 Mobility and Community Connectivity

In addition to addressing injustices of the past, reconnecting a community that was irreparably divided by the interstate, and working to create opportunities and spaces for the community to reknit, uplift, and engage, a new bridge or freeway lid over I-95/64 in the Jackson Ward community will create opportunities to build and advance mobility and connectivity as well.

**Barriers to Access, Mobility, and Economic Development** – There are over 500 businesses, schools, universities, police and fire stations, medical facilities, religious institutions, and recreational and historical facilities within a half-mile walkshed from the project location; however, goods and services are limited in the

and 28 percent do not have internet access; therefore, a focus of community outreach will continue to be through mailings, door hangers, pop-up events – where the information comes to the residents – and attendance at community events – when the community is already there. The plan will also establish goals and measures of effectiveness, which may include the number and types of community institutions, organizations and stakeholders consulted; number of communication methods used to distribute messaging; number of social media shares, likes and comments for each post; number of unique visits to project website; and number of people attending workshops/meetings and/or participating online.

With federal assistance from the USDOT, the community participation plan will be implemented in accordance with Title VI and all Federal civil rights requirements.



northern portion of Jackson Ward and non-vehicular access to these amenities are inhibited by the barrier created by I-95/64. A walkability analysis conducted as part of the Jackson Ward Community Plan reveals that the southern portion of Jackson Ward has a walk score of 95-97, where goods, services and amenities are highly accessible by foot. In contrast, the northern portion of Jackson Ward has a moderate walk score of 56-69 based on nearby schools and cultural centers; however, better connections to and from this area are needed to leverage downtown growth, expand market opportunities for this portion of Jackson Ward, and improve access to businesses and essential services.

***Improving Access, Mobility, and Opportunities for Economic Development*** – The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study identified a recommended framework design that would reconnect the historic street grid, establishing a new vehicular and multi-modal bridge connection at St. James Street in addition to bicycle and/or pedestrian travel routes at St. Paul and St. John Streets. These new connections would improve accessibility throughout the Jackson Ward community and would be implemented in a manner that aligns with the City of Richmond’s Complete Streets program, [Better Streets](#), which has given significant attention to recent [pedestrian safety improvements](#) at over 450 signalized intersections, including high visibility crosswalks, and accessible ramps in the City since its implementation in 2018.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project would also complement VDOT’s realignment of the Belvidere Street ramp accessing I-95/64, removal of an existing slip ramp from Brook Road, and crosswalk improvements that will improve access and safety for both motorists and pedestrians, in addition to the planned Fall Line Trail for biking and walking, sections of which are already underway in the Richmond region.

In addition to improving accessibility through the implementation of safe vehicular and multi-modal connections over the interstate, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project is intended to serve as a place for community gathering with amenities, green spaces, programmable spaces, and opportunities for new development sites that contribute to revitalization and redevelopment. The design framework, identified as part of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study, includes recommendations for spaces to creatively incorporate opportunities for multi-use commercial and housing development as

well as areas for arts and entertainment, youth development, and faith and contemplative uses.

***Safe Mobility and Connectivity for All*** – The City of Richmond’s equity-centered climate action and resilience planning initiative, RVAgreen 2050, focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent by 2030 and achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Through the implementation of walking, cycling, and other active transportation connections, in addition to the incorporation of green areas and community gathering spaces, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project would support this initiative and help the community adapt to Richmond’s climate impacts of extreme heat, precipitation, and flooding.

Beyond the multimodal connections that would be provided by the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, the future bridge connections and freeway lid over the interstate is anticipated to turn a community severed by transportation infrastructure into a healthy, developing network of mobility and community connections that will serve the community of Jackson Ward, its neighbors, and the people of greater Richmond. Presently, the annual Second Street Festival has grown to be one of Mid-Atlantic’s largest street festivals and is host to a celebration of Jackson Ward’s rich heritage and culture. The mural at the [intersection of West Marshall and Brook Road](#) and the accompanying pedestrian plaza and parklet are a wonderful example of the merging of art, community building, and transportation. These endeavors demonstrate the initiative, creativity and commitment of the City, its partners, and the community that would be carried into the Reconnect Jackson Ward project to seamlessly integrate new connections over the interstate with the character, context, and land use of the surrounding community.

### **C.3 Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships**

The City of Richmond is requesting financial assistance from the USDOT to continue

planning activities for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, to ensure that the future

implementation of a bridge structure or freeway lid redresses inequities and benefits economically disadvantaged communities in a way that is meaningful and contextually relevant to the Jackson Ward neighborhood and surrounding communities.

***Community-Centered Approach to Envision a Reconnection*** – As previously noted, the City of Richmond intends to continue to carry out a robust community participation plan, as the conceptual design and preliminary engineering for the project is advanced. Based on community input provided during the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study, the City will require that future site plan design draws upon case studies and similar experiences specifically designing Black spaces. Additionally, further archival investigative research will be performed, not only to ensure that the project is implemented in a way that minimizes effects to sensitive cultural resources and adjacent historic properties, but also to identify descendants and historic imagery for incorporation into the project design.

***Community Partnerships*** – The City of Richmond has been working collaboratively with community members and organizations, with support for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project substantiated by endorsement letters provided with this RCP grant application. Among these are letters from United States Senators Mark R. Warner and Tim Kaine, United States Representatives Donald McEachin and Abigail Spanberger, Virginia Senator Ghazala Hashimi, Virginia Delegate

Jeffery Bourne, Virginia Secretary W. Sheppard Miller III, and 18 other agencies, churches, and community organizations. Other critical partner organizations from a community development and transportation and mobility perspective include Venture Richmond, the business engagement organization dedicated to improvements throughout the City of Richmond; Sports Backers, a local non-profit dedicated to transforming the Richmond community into a physically active community and a strong advocacy group for the Fall Line Trail; and Greater Washington Partnership, a civic alliance focused on expanding access to opportunity and removing barriers to mobility from Baltimore to Richmond. Additionally, the City of Richmond is working with local universities to support historic research efforts and will partner with tech companies in the community to create innovative solutions such as a virtual reality tour of Jackson Ward before the construction of the highway.

***Management and Stewardship*** – The City of Richmond is actively working with VDOT and other state and regional partners to identify agency roles and responsibilities of maintenance and ownership of a new structure over the interstate. Financial assistance is requested from the USDOT to support efforts to identify and recruit community sponsors and partners for the development of an organization or foundation that may participate in the maintenance of the facility or ownership of program elements or activities in a proactive community-centered manner.

#### **C.4 Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity**

***Vision and Framework*** – Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods represent one of the nation’s most important centers of Black cultural and economic vitality. Founded as a gerrymandered voting ward in 1871, Jackson Ward created a self-sustaining economy that made the area famous as the ‘Black Wall Street’ and vibrant with theaters, clubs and restaurants. Much of the economic and social activity declined after the construction of the highway,

particularly north of the interstate. The proposed bridge structure or freeway lid over I-95/64 is an opportunity to rebuild and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, through the creation of community spaces, transportation connections, and the potential for new development. The solutions identified in the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study included a recommended design framework, developed through community input and collaboration to

inform considerations for future design and engineering. The recommended design framework focuses on four primary themes within the project site: a mixed-use/mixed-income commercial and housing space; an arts and entertainment space; a youth engagement space; and a faith and contemplative space. These priority themes identified by the community will help guide the process of physically reconnecting the two sides of Jackson Ward with the history, context, and properties adjacent to the site to create a project that supports a safe, connected, and vibrant community.

Additionally, the Jackson Ward Community Plan looks at land use, housing, community engagement, and other strategies in order to create a shared vision for Jackson Ward's future, with a focus on equitable development and opportunities throughout the community.

***Gentrification and Displacement*** – The threat of gentrification is real in many cities, and it can lead to the displacement of longtime residents. Revitalization of Jackson Ward south of the highway has already started with the influx of new businesses, apartments, and developments, causing rents to increase. If the appropriate controls are not put in place, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project and redevelopment of the Gilpin Court complex could cause additional market pressures that would further increase gentrification and displacement. Strategies recommended to address gentrification and displacement include renters' assistance, construction of mixed-income housing, senior's assistance, and support for low-income and mixed-income homeownership. The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study includes research and recommendations that the City of Richmond is actively exploring to help guide

potential policy and regulations to address anti-displacement, gentrification, and reparations as the Reconnect Jackson Ward project and other redevelopment initiatives in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods advance.

Another key component of anti-displacement strategies is to preserve existing businesses by supporting their longevity amidst potential increases in rents and/or the sale of buildings where they inhabit. In order to protect, preserve and incubate Black-Owned businesses in the Jackson Ward area, the Feasibility Study recommends mapping Black-Owned businesses, analyzing existing retail space prices and availability, incorporating workforce development, and including mixed-use commercial space in the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project.

***Shared Prosperity*** – One of the goals of reconnecting Jackson Ward is to recreate a thriving community that promotes equity and eliminates the barriers and disparities for the community's most vulnerable residents. Shared prosperity has no target or finish line because the aim is to continuously improve the well-being of those at the bottom of the income disparity. Today, there already exists a strong arts, culture, and organizational infrastructure and placemaking effort to celebrate Black history and culture, including the JXN Project, Black History Museum, the NPS-managed Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, Elegba Folklore Society, the Hippodrome, and the Second Street Festival. The Jackson Ward Community Plan and this Reconnect Jackson Ward project are another avenue to creatively place new installations, add other venues, curate new voices and places, and create new points of interaction.



Figure 5: Primary Framework Themes



**APPENDIX A: Budget**

## Proposed Budget and Planning Activities Summary

Section 11509 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) establishes a pilot program through which an eligible entity may apply for funding, in order to restore community connectivity to conduct planning activities necessary to design a project to remove, retrofit, or mitigate an existing eligible facility. The City of Richmond is requesting \$1.69 million in Planning Grant funding in response to the US Department of Transportation's June 29, 2022, [FY22 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program](#). The requested funding amount represents approximately 80 percent of the anticipated costs associated with the proposed planning activities necessary to advance the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. The remaining 20 percent will be funded through local or regional funding provided by the City of Richmond or through other private partnerships or in-kind contributions that the City of Richmond is actively to secure in advance of any federal funding authorization. **Table 1** provides a summary of the requested funding and a summary of these distinct components are included in the descriptions that follow. The City of Richmond would be committed to obtaining additional funding to complete the activities listed below should additional costs be incurred.

*Table 1: Reconnect Jackson Ward Planning Costs*

Item Description	Estimated Cost	Requested Federal Share	Local Match	
			Local Share	Local %
Traffic Analysis / Impact Study	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$ -	-%
Environmental Review	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$ -	-%
Conceptual Design / Preliminary Eng.	\$850,000	\$765,000	\$51,000	6%
Local History / Cultural Archival Research	\$160,000	\$151,000	\$9,000	6%
Philanthropic Coordination	\$100,000	\$ -	\$100,000	100%
Community Engagement	\$180,000	\$ -	\$180,000	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,690,000</b>	<b>\$1,350,000</b>	<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>20%</b>

The following are eligible planning activities proposed for federal funding, consistent with Sec. C.3.i.b of the FY 22 NOFO [IIJA Sec. 11509(c)(2)]:

- Traffic Analysis and Impact Study:** A traffic study will be prepared to document the existing and design year operation during the weekday peak hours of the study area roadways associated with the new roadway connection at St. James Street including impacts to traffic, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit operations. Future year analyses will take into consideration the Jackson Ward Community Plan and proposed development in the surrounding vicinity.

The study area will include portions of Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods bound by the CSX railroad to the north, 5<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, Leigh Street to the south, and Belvidere Street to the west. Data collection will include short-term traffic class counts including pedestrians and bicyclists at intersections within the study area, field condition observations, and existing signal timings. Study area signal timings will be provided in Synchro files by the City of Richmond for the City of Richmond Signal System. StreetLight data will be obtained to help determine the origins and destinations of motorists through the study area to perform a diversion analysis along parallel streets to determine potential traffic impacts and potential mitigation measures.

The field observations will include lane configurations, speed limits, traffic control and signal phasing, and other features relevant to the capacity analysis and the Synchro files will be updated to reflect current conditions. Future opening year and design year traffic forecasts will be based on a selected growth rate based on historical count data and account for the Reconnect Jackson Ward community plan and proposed development. Future year Synchro files will be updated to reflect future changes in geometry associated with the Reconnect Jackson Ward plan and the proposed St. James Street connection.

Measures of effectiveness (MOEs) to be documented for existing, opening year, and design year weekday AM and PM peak hour conditions include intersection level of service (LOS), delay by movement and overall intersection, and queue lengths at critical intersections. Traffic signal warrant analysis will be performed for intersections where traffic signals may be warranted at the proposed connections of St. James Street over I-95 at Baker Street and Duval Street. An assessment will be performed to identify the appropriate type of pedestrian crossings of proposed new roadways.

A safety analysis will be performed based on a review of crash data for a five-year period within the study area. Crash data will be summarized by severity, crash type, year, location, and compared to average crash rates to identify crash trends.

- **Environmental Review:** An environmental review of the project, supported by necessary agency coordination and technical analyses, will be completed to ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), required for the use of Federal funds for project implementation and impacts to the Interstate System. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is not anticipated to have any significant effects to the human or natural environment and is expected to qualify for a Categorical Exclusion or minimal Environmental Assessment, pursuant to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) implementing regulations for NEPA, codified at 23 CFR §771.117(d) or §771.119, respectively. However, coordination with FHWA and VDOT will be necessary to obtain concurrence on the appropriate level of environmental documentation. Documentation of the environmental review, supporting coordination, and analyses will be prepared as part of this task to ensure compliance with NEPA and applicable laws and regulations.

As part of the agency coordination associated with the environmental review, coordination will occur with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), as necessary, to incorporate the Reconnect Jackson Ward project in the federally required long-range Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Additionally, coordination will be facilitated with the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization to supply sufficient information for the project to be considered for inclusion in the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), *ConnectRVA 2045*, in which the project is currently included in the Vision Plan.

The following are eligible planning activities proposed for federal funding, consistent with Sec. C.3.i.c of the FY 22 NOFO [IIJA Sec. 11509(c)(3)]:

- **Conceptual Design and Preliminary Engineering:** To support the environmental review and identification of potential project impacts, the project design will be advanced to a level of detail sufficient to specify foundation systems; utilities and infrastructure services required to support the landscaping and development on the proposed structure; and identification of drainage systems to collect and distribute surface runoff and subsurface water infiltration.

To advance these preliminary engineering efforts, a conceptual site plan will first be prepared utilizing the design framework established through the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study efforts. Additionally, the site plan development is anticipated to encompass a collaborative effort with the ongoing Jackson Ward Community Plan for the sharing of resources and to ensure the project aligns with the larger community planning efforts. The site plan design will draw upon case studies and similar experiences specifically designing Black spaces. Additionally, and in conjunction with traffic studies, structure design, environmental review, and resultant site plan, roadway infrastructure conceptual plans will be prepared and designate improvements necessary to accommodate the proposed project's goals and intentions for the complete facility. These may include effected roadways within the designated footprint and those impacted by effects of these significant improvements. Included in these design efforts will be determinations of suitable typical roadway cross-sections, demolition and paving limits, coordination of utilities, drainage needs and storm water management, traffic engineering such as signing and pavement marking, signalization, Intelligent Transportation System items, street lighting, geotechnical subsurface investigations, and constructability determinations.

Upon the development of a conceptual site plan, Stage I bridge plans and a type, size and location (TS&L) report will be prepared to support the conceptual site plan design. The TS&L report will document the specific structural materials; elevations and preliminary dimensions; plantings and landscape features; and architectural lighting and other architectural features. Accompanying the TS&L report, a refined construction cost estimate and detailed project schedule will be prepared. The development of preliminary engineering plans will be informed by adjacent projects, such as the Belvidere Street Interchange Improvements, and consideration of opportunities for value engineering.

- **Local History and Culture Archival Research:** To inform cultural resources coordination conducted under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as part of the environmental review process, as well as to inform the project design, deed research and an archival investigation will be performed to identify descendants and historic imagery for incorporation into the project design.

This effort will also include creation of a web-based application that allows residents and tourists to virtually explore geographically accurate monuments and historically relevant areas within Jackson Ward.

The City of Richmond will work with area universities to supplement the historical research and local virtual reality companies to create an informative and immersive remembrance experience as a means to archive the community's history using innovative technologies.

- **Philanthropic Coordination:** A portion of the Planning Grant funding will be utilized for the recruitment of community supports and partners dedicated to the creation and establishment of an organization/foundation which will be tasked with leading, guiding and fundraising through the construction phase and subsequently coordinating programs, partnerships and ongoing maintenance of the RJW project after construction and build out.
- **Community Engagement:** Community engagement and outreach activities, following an established Community Participation Plan, will continue to be a critical component of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project, not only to maintain and continue to generate invested public interest in the project, but also to meet the requirements of the NEPA process as well as other state and local design approval requirements.

**APPENDIX B: Endorsement Letters**

No.	Name	Agency/Organization/Affiliation
1.	Tim Kaine	US Senator
2.	Mark Warner	US Senator
3.	Donald McEachin	US Representative
4.	Abigail Spanberger	US Representative
5.	Jeffery Bourne	Virginia State Delegate
6.	Dawn Adams	Virginia State Delegate
7.	Ghazala Hashmi	Virginia Senator
8.	W. Sheppard Miller, III	Virginia Secretary of Transportation
9.	John L Lumpkins, Jr.	Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization Chair
10.	Ellen Robertson	Richmond City Council Vice President and 6 <sup>th</sup> District Councilor
11.	Katherine Jordan and Ann-Frances Lambert	Richmond City Council 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> District Councilors
12.	Steven Nesmith	Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority Chief Executive Officer
13.	Barrett Hardiman	Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority Board Chairman
14.	Janis Allen	Historic Jackson Ward Association President
15.	Annie Mahdee and Charlene Pitchford	Gilpin Court Tenant Council President and Treasurer
16.	Melody Short	Jackson Ward Collective Co-Founder
17.	Lisa Sims	Venture Richmond Chief Executive Officer
18.	Meghan Z. Gough	Virginia Commonwealth University Associate Professor
19.	Michael Rao	Virginia Commonwealth University President
20.	Sylvia Gale	University of Richmond Equity & Community Unit
21.	Hakim Lucas	Virginia Union University President and Chief Executive Officer
22.	Monroe Harris, Jr.	Black History Museum Board Member Chairman
23.	Tyrone Nelson	6th Mount Zion Baptist Church Pastor
24.	Adam Bond	Ebenezer Baptist Church Pastor
25.	Jon Lugbill	Sports Backers Executive Director
26.	Joe McAndrew	Greater Washington Partnership Vice President

TIM Kaine  
VIRGINIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607  
(202) 224-4024

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON  
FOREIGN RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON  
THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,  
AND PENSIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607

October 6, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write to express support for the City of Richmond, an applicant for grant funding under the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program, for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project. This project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, bringing new opportunities to one of Richmond's lowest-income communities and helping the City to heal and grow from past wrongs.

Jackson Ward is the quintessential example of a community harmed by a transportation project. Known in the 1920s through 1940s as both the "Harlem of the South" and the "Black Wall Street," the neighborhood was a thriving center of African American life in Richmond. Maggie L. Walker, the first African American woman to charter a bank in the U.S., is just one of the many history-makers who resided in Jackson Ward. While segregationist public policy drastically limited opportunities for African Americans in the South, Jackson Ward served as a hub of opportunity for commercial, cultural, religious, educational, and political excellence. In the 1950s, however, public officials chose to rebuild the Richmond/Petersburg Turnpike (now I-95/64) through the middle of Jackson Ward. More than 900 families and hundreds of businesses were displaced by the project and the northern half of the neighborhood was disconnected from Richmond's city center.

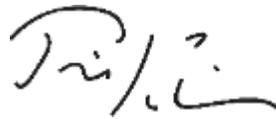
Today, the highway remains a permanent barrier to economic, educational, health, and cultural opportunities. Residents who live to the north of the highway have double the unemployment rate and nearly one-third the median household income as those living south of it. While these residents live mere blocks from the jobs, medical offices, higher-ed facilities, and public services available in Downtown Richmond, I-95/64 makes access cumbersome and isolates the neighborhood from the growth the Downtown is experiencing.

The City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia have begun the work to envision a Reconnected Jackson Ward. Since January 2022, they have held public information meetings, pop-up events, and focus groups to ensure the project responds to the needs of the

community. Public input created a framework for the groups, to ensure the project responds to the needs of the community. Public input created a framework for the project, which imagines a cap over the highway that reconnects the northern and southern sides of the neighborhood. In September, the team completed a feasibility study that lays out possible paths forward. The conceptual design reconnects the historic street grid and creates four thematic "blocks" within the project area, a Mixed-Use Space, a Youth Engagement Space, a Faith & Contemplative Space, and an Art & Entertainment Space.

Please give full and fair evaluation to this project, which will allow the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia to move the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project further ahead. Reconnect Jackson Ward will help some of Richmond's lowest-income residents while acknowledging past harm and creating opportunities for healing, unification, and a revival of prosperity. Should you have any questions regarding this project, contact my Office's Grants Coordinator, [Elda\\_Stanco@kaine.senate.gov](mailto:Elda_Stanco@kaine.senate.gov). Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Kaine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Tim Kaine

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4606

September 28, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Floor 9  
Washington, DC 20003-3660

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write today in support of the City of Richmond, Virginia's grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to assist with the Reconnecting Jackson Ward project.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmond residents. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1st Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway. I understand that this project will create community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. More than 900 families and hundreds of businesses were displaced. In your December 2021 visit to the neighborhood, I know that you saw this division that the highway created firsthand. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to preserve the history of the neighborhood, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the residents.

I ask that you give this proposal every appropriate consideration. To the extent possible, please continue to update my office on the status of this grant by emailing [GrantSupport\\_Warner@warner.senate.gov](mailto:GrantSupport_Warner@warner.senate.gov).

Thank you for your service on behalf of my constituents.

Sincerely,



MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senator

MRW/aw

**A. DONALD McEACHIN**

4TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

**WASHINGTON OFFICE**

314 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-6365

**RICHMOND DISTRICT OFFICE**

110 N. ROBINSON ST. SUITE 403  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23220  
(804) 486-1840

**SUFFOLK DISTRICT OFFICE**

131 N. SATATOGA STREET, SUITE B  
SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA 23434  
(757) 942-6050



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4604**

**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE**

ENERGY

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS**

September 28, 2022

Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write to bring to your attention an application from the City of Richmond for grant funding through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant fund for the Reconnecting Jackson Ward Project. I ask for your full and fair consideration of their request. In Richmond, everyone from non-profit leaders, to historians, to public officials and many, many others, have begun the work to imagine the future of the Jackson Ward neighborhood—one that mends the physical, social, and economic harm caused by a past transportation project.

We were proud to welcome you to Richmond in December 2021, to introduce you to the history of Jackson Ward and to envision the future of the neighborhood with you. Before Interstates 95 and 64 cut the neighborhood in half, Jackson Ward was a nationally significant center of African American culture and finance. It was once home to luminaries such as Maggie Walker, the first African American woman to charter a bank and John Mitchell, editor of the African American newspaper, *The Planet*, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2021. In the 1950s, large portions of the neighborhood were demolished to make room for a new highway. The construction and years of disinvestment that followed lead to a decline in Jackson Ward, significantly limiting opportunities for residents and businesses alike. Local leaders, like The JXN Project and the Jackson Ward Foundation, have highlighted the complex and under-told story of the Jackson Ward; brought new funding and training opportunities to local businesses; and pushed civic leaders to take bold action to restore the neighborhood.

Throughout 2022, the City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia conducted a feasibility study to develop options to reconnect Jackson Ward. Community-input led to the creation of a “Framework Plan,” which envisions an infrastructure project that reconnects the historic street grid while creating new spaces for contemplation, youth engagement, and the arts. A planning grant under DOT’s Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program will support further studies and analysis, including the creation of an equitable development plan, and will enable the community visioning process to continue.

Reconnecting Jackson Ward will not only honor the nationally significant historic legacy of the neighborhood, but it will help build on the grass-roots momentum that is helping Jackson Ward’s residents and businesses thrive. Again, I ask for your full and fair consideration of the City of Richmond for grant funding through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot grant fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "A. Donald McEachin".

A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

September 23, 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to request you provide full and fair consideration of the application submitted by the City of Richmond, Virginia for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program funding opportunity as awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

As I understand it, the purpose of this program is to reconnect communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including mobility, access, or economic development.

If awarded, Richmond intends to use the funds for the Reconnecting Jackson Ward Project, which seeks to improve access to north of Jackson Ward and to reconnect it and surrounding neighborhoods through the creation of a freeway lid to contain new development, transportation connections, and public spaces. The City believes this project provides a unique opportunity to reconnect the history and culture of Jackson Ward to the Richmond community.

As you may recall from our site-visit together in December of 2021, Jackson Ward is a historic neighborhood in downtown Richmond that is divided in half by Interstate 95 and Interstate 64. At one time, it was a thriving African American neighborhood known as the “Harlem of the South.” However, a highway was built that directly cut through the neighborhood, displacing over 900 families, 90% of which were Black, and hundreds of businesses. The City says the highway permanently cut off residents who live on the north side from economic, educational, health, and cultural opportunities in Downtown Richmond. Today, residents on the north side of the interstate have a median income of nearly one-third of those on the southern side.

I thank you for your time and attention to this grant application, as well as your service to the constituents of VA-07.

Kind Regards,



Abigail Spanberger  
Member of Congress



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

**JEFFREY M. BOURNE**  
Post Office Box 406  
Richmond, Virginia 23218

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
COURTS OF JUSTICE  
EDUCATION

SEVENTY-FIRST DISTRICT

October 3, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to express my utmost support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmonders. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1st Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community.

Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway in the 1950s. Between 1955 and 1957, more than 7,000 people (900 families, of which 90% were black) were displaced. Seven hundred homes and businesses were demolished in Jackson Ward and 34 streets were rerouted.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

This planning process will be an act of healing that is necessary to mend both the physical, social, and economic harm that more than a century of policy has perpetrated on Jackson Ward. By planning with the residents rather than planning for them, it is our hope that the efforts will transform the "Tale of Two

Neighborhoods” into a “wholeness” in Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond’s continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Bourne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Delegate Jeffrey M. Bourne  
71<sup>st</sup> District



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
RICHMOND

**OFFICE OF DAWN M. ADAMS**

900 E. MAIN ST.  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23260  
SIXTY-EIGHTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS  
GENERAL LAWS  
HEALTH, WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS

October 6th, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

VIA EMAIL

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to express my utmost support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmonders. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that

include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the “Harlem of the South,” much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond’s continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Dr. Dawn M. Adams, Nurse Practitioner  
Virginia House of Delegates – 68<sup>th</sup> District

# SENATE OF VIRGINIA

**GHAZALA F. HASHMI**  
10TH SENATORIAL DISTRICT  
ALL OF POWHATAN COUNTY; PART OF  
CHESTERFIELD COUNTY; AND PART OF  
THE CITY OF RICHMOND  
  
P. O. Box 396  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23218



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
EDUCATION AND HEALTH  
GENERAL LAWS AND TECHNOLOGY  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

September 27, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

## VIA EMAIL

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

The City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project has my full support. This application is submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its Richmond 300 Master Plan, a 20-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on equitable, sustainable, and cohesive development, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities, resources, and affordability for all Richmonders. Guided by the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for the RCP grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1st Street, and develop spaces to nurture and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history that are present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward that were deliberately divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway. The project's efforts will focus on the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and new developments that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplation, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement.

Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined, especially North of the interstate, after the construction of the highway. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project will revive the significant

Secretary Pete Buttigieg

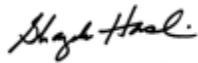
September 27, 2022

Page 2

history of Jackson Ward, increase the neighborhood's connections to other communities by making mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the residents.

Richmond has made significant progress in the last several years as it continues to grapple with the legacies of slavery, Confederacy, Jim Crow, and racial injustices. This progress must be credited to citizens, advocates, community organizers, nonprofit organizations, and those public servants determined to see change. The RCP grant will help to continue this progress by addressing and dismantling past infrastructure decisions that were made on the calculus of cementing segregation, poverty, and racial divides. I fully endorse this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve local and regional infrastructure that will improve overall quality of life for those most significantly impacted by past injustices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ghazala Hashmi".

Ghazala F. Hashmi, PhD  
Member, Virginia Senate



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

W. Sheppard Miller III  
Secretary of Transportation

September 7, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write in support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program.

The City of Richmond is applying for this grant to advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant culture and history present in this community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reconnect the two sides of Jackson Ward that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of I-95. Richmond intends to unite this community through the creation of community facilities, increased transportation connections, and partnerships with the private sector to develop new spaces that include mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of I-95. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward.

I support this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life. I thank you in advance for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "W. Sheppard Miller III".

W. Sheppard Miller III



September 6, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.  
Washington DC 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization, I am pleased to share with you the TPO's strong support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. The City's application was submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

As you know, through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that historically created displacement and still today act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being. I understand that priority is to be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities. I can tell you with confidence that "reconnecting" Jackson Ward will accomplish the RCP's Program goals of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for a community that was separated and adversely impacted by a primary interstate, I-95, placed through the center of Richmond in the 1950s.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The Master Plan focuses on making the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmonders. In accordance with its Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided by the construction of the interstate highway. This repairing, rebuilding, and reknitting will be accomplished through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project will reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the residents of Jackson Ward.

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
September 6, 2022  
Page 2

The RRTPO wholeheartedly endorses this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and to the improve overall quality of life.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John L. Lumpkins Jr." in a cursive script.

John L. Lumpkins Jr.,  
Chair, Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization/

cc: Cynthia I. Newbille, President Richmond City Council (via email)  
Chet Parsons, Director of Transportation, RRTPO (via email)  
W. Canova Peterson, Vice Chairman, RRTPO (via email)  
Maritza Pechin, Deputy Director for Equitable Development, City of Richmond (via email)



# Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

## **RICHMOND GATEWAY 6TH VOTER DISTRICT** **The Honorable Ellen F. Robertson**

*Councilwoman, Richmond Gateway 6th Voter District*

September 20, 2022

Dear United States Department of Transportation (USDOT):

It is with extreme enthusiasm that I write this letter of support for the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the reconnecting communities pilot discretionary grant program (RCP)!

Richmond is a perfect example of a city where history has a wonderful opportunity to meet infrastructure. Richmond has a surprising abundance of surprises – and one of them is the wonderful Jackson Ward community. Jackson Ward is a historically African-American district in Richmond with a rich history of African-American businesses. It once served as the Mecca of Black commerce, entertainment and religion. Previously, free Blacks joined freed slaves and their descendants and created a thriving African-American business community, and became known as the "Black Wall Street of America" - and for good reason. It was the seat of black innovation, culture and business, and it was the first Richmond community built by blacks after the Civil War.

Jackson Ward was central to the Civil Rights Movement in Richmond. Jackson Ward is also a ward that displaced so many African-American families. The City of Richmond owes it to those families that we right those wrongs – and what a perfect opportunity here. This grant certainly would help in making that happen.

This planning grant would assist the City in developing detailed design documents for the *Reconnect Jackson Ward* project, and conducting historical research, environmental assessments, traffic impact analyses, and continued community engagement. This is critical work that needs to be done. We can never erase history, but there are things we can do to ease the pain. Displacement and demobilization are no longer what we want to be known by. We are a City continually working toward unity, solutions and democracy. This grant would ensure we continue on that trajectory. I'm beyond thrilled at the potential of this awesome opportunity for the *Reconnect Jackson Ward Project*!

Sincerely,

Ellen F. Robertson  
Vice President, Councilmember (6<sup>th</sup> District)



# Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

## Councilmembers Katherine Jordan & Ann-Frances Lambert

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

This letter is to express our support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmond residents. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity make this planning process an act of healing that is necessary to mend the physical, economic, and social harm that more than a century of policy has perpetrated on Jackson Ward. We endorse this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

Katherine Jordan  
2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilor, Richmond City Council

Ann-Frances Lambert  
3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilor, Richmond City Council



P.O. Box 26887  
Richmond VA 23261-6887  
901 Chamberlayne Pkwy.  
Richmond, VA 23220

(O) (804) 780-4200  
TTY: Dial 7-1-1

[info@rrha.com](mailto:info@rrha.com)  
[www.rrha.com](http://www.rrha.com)

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Steven Nesmith

**Board of Commissioners**  
Barrett Hardiman, Chair  
W.R. "Bill" Johnson, Jr, Vice Chair  
Veronica G. Blount  
Charlene Pitchford  
Patrice Shelton, CCHW/Sr  
Eddie L. Jackson, Jr.  
Harold Parker, Jr.

October 3, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to express my utmost support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

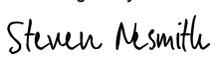
In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmonders. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation



connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the “Harlem of the South,” much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond’s continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
08E467882AB7473...

Steven Nesmith  
Chief Executive Officer





P.O. Box 26887  
Richmond VA 23261-6887  
901 Chamberlayne Pkwy,  
Richmond, VA 23220

(O) (804) 780-4200  
TTY: Dial 7-1-1

[info@rrha.com](mailto:info@rrha.com)  
[www.rrha.com](http://www.rrha.com)

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Steven Nesmith

**Board of Commissioners**  
Barrett Hardiman, Chair  
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Veronica G. Blount  
Charlene Pitchford  
Patrice Shelton, CCHWSr  
Eddie L. Jackson, Jr.  
Harold Parker, Jr.

October 4, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As the Chairman of the Board of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA), I would like to offer my enthusiastic support for the City of Richmond's planning grant for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project. RRHA's largest and oldest public housing community in the City of Richmond, Gilpin Court, is the northern half of Jackson Ward that has been completely cutoff from the rest of the city by transportation infrastructure for the last 70 years.

Once an epicenter for Black culture and a thriving neighborhood, considered the Harlem of the South, the state and local governments intentionally destroyed Jackson Ward with the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, which was adopted into the interstate highway system upon completion. Construction of I-95 robbed over two thousand African American families of their homes and has separated the two halves of Jackson Ward for 70 years.

To add insult to injury, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) demolished nearly all the remaining homes north of the interstate to create the largest public housing development in Richmond – Gilpin Court. The residents of Gilpin Court are surrounded by I-95 and the railroad tracks on all sides that almost completely isolates them from the rest of the city. RRHA and Richmond are fortunate to have received a Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant from HUD with the goal of redeveloping Gilpin Court and making all of Jackson Ward feel like one neighborhood again. Our goal is to honor the spirit of the neighborhood as it once was prior to government intervention in its growth while providing quality affordable housing, economic opportunities, and an inviting place that will continue the healing process in Richmond that started with the confederate statues coming down.



The Honorable Secretary Peter Buttigieg

Page -2-

October 4, 2022

We cannot erase the trauma caused by the construction of the interstate through Jackson Ward. We can, at the very least, close the wound and bridge the divide between the two halves of this neighborhood. This action will not only be symbolic, it will also create a space to be given back to a community offering an opportunity to heal. Thank you for your consideration of Richmond's application. Our city is on the brink of true transformation and this will be a major catalyst towards its realization.

Best regards,



Barrett Hardiman

Board Chairman

Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority

# The Historic Jackson Ward Association

October 6, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing on behalf of the historic Jackson Ward neighborhood located in the heart of Richmond Virginia, the capital of the former Confederacy. This neighborhood is the largest national landmark district associated with African-American history, commerce and culture. The district's historic recognition has been further expanded to include the significant contributions made to the Civil Rights movement.

On behalf of the Historic Jackson Ward Association and the community, I express support of the city of Richmond's Planning Grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward (RJW) project. As outlined in the feasibility study, the objective is to continue to explore a design to increase connectivity between the north and south sides of highways 95/64 and to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer.

The study also calls for alignment between the RJW project and the current work underway to develop a Jackson Ward Community Plan (JWCP) funded by a HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant (CNPNG). RJW is also intended to connect to the African American history and culture of the neighborhood and increase economic opportunities for black business development and entrepreneurship. The JWCP will focus on providing equitable and affordable housing opportunities, including home ownership, within Jackson Ward. This was expressed as a prominent concern throughout the RJW feasibility study.

Between 1955 and 1957, more than 7,000 people (900 families, of which 90% were black) were displaced. 700 homes and businesses were demolished and 34 streets were rerouted. A community was stifled, people were destabilized and potential wealth accumulation was significantly interrupted. Much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway particularly north of the interstate.

Not only should we aggressively identify and support remedies to reconnect, reimagine and repair Jackson Ward, we also must continue to work to restore the soul of this beloved community. Supporting the RJW project could prove an important step in this direction.

Sincerely,

Janis Allen, President  
Historic Jackson Ward ([hjwassociation@gmail.com](mailto:hjwassociation@gmail.com))

Gilpin Tenant Council  
10 W. Charity St  
Richmond, VA. 23220  
gilpincourt.tc@gmail.com

October 06, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary, Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Gilpin Tenant Council we express my utmost support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmond era. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvedere Street and North 1- Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were

Gilpin Tenant Council  
10 W. Charity St  
Richmond, VA. 23220  
gilpincourt.tc@gmail.com

divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the “Harlem of the South,” much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond’s continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,  
President

Annie Mahdee

*Annie Mahdee*  
Treasurer

Charlene Pitchford

*Charlene Pitchford*



October 4, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am pleased to express my utmost support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its' Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmonders. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the “Harlem of the South,” much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond’s continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melody Short". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melody Short  
Co-Founder  
The JWC Foundation



October 3, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Venture Richmond, I am pleased to present this letter of support for the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

Venture Richmond is the city's public/private 'downtown' organization that engages businesses and community leaders in partnering with the City to enhance the vitality of the community, particularly downtown, through economic development, marketing, promotion, advocacy and events. We have had representation since day one on the Reconnecting Jackson Ward Steering Committee and have either led or supported a number of placemaking projects in the neighborhood. We also host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Festival in Jackson Ward, which has been occurring annually for the past 34 years. In that time, it has grown to be one of the Mid-Atlantic's largest street festivals. Thousands visit historic Jackson Ward to reminisce about the days when 2nd Street was the heart and soul of Richmond's African-American community and was known as "the Harlem of the South." Today, Jackson Ward continues to be a thriving neighborhood and community, though much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods suffered after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the interstate.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Sims".

Lisa Sims

CEO

Venture Richmond



# VCU

## L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

4 October 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program  
Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Urban and Regional Planning Program at Virginia Commonwealth University, it is with great pleasure that I submit this letter with enthusiastic support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities. The planning grant would assist the City in developing research, assessments, designs and community engagement for the *Reconnect Jackson Ward* project, aimed at reconnecting a once thriving Black community that was divided in the 1950s by Interstate 95 (I-95), and has since experienced economic decline.

The *Reconnect Jackson Ward* project emerges from the Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan completed in 2020 to develop and grow the city as a more equitable and sustainable city. The history of planning and policy decisions that destroyed Black homes and businesses, and, in the case of Jackson Ward, displaced more than 7,000 people, remains front and center for many people - especially those impacted most by these decisions. Advancing a connection over I-95 will enable a new era for Richmond, as it starts to contend with its discriminatory history, and reweave the bisected urban fabric in Jackson Ward, which was once the center of Black excellence. The *Reconnect Jackson Ward* project is an opportunity to demonstrate **how to do reparative urban planning**, which, in partnership with community, centers Black history, voices and meanings of this neighborhood. Envisioning new connections may include new community facilities, transportation connections and economic development, but also community spaces symbolic of the vibrant history and culture of Jackson Ward, such as mixed use, arts and entertainment and youth engagement opportunities.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond's effort to focus planning and infrastructure investments toward realizing an equitable city.

Sincerely,

Dr. Meghan Z. Gough  
Associate Professor, Urban and Regional Studies + Planning  
Virginia Commonwealth University



September 21, 2022

Virginia Commonwealth University  
Office of the President

910 West Franklin Street  
Box 842512  
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2512

804 828-1200 • Fax: 804 828-7532  
TDD: 1-800-828-1120  
president@vcu.edu

Mr. Richard Chávez  
Director  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, District of Columbia 20590

Dear Director Chávez:

On behalf of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), I am writing to express my full support of the City of Richmond's grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

This grant is an outstanding opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, a historical neighborhood in Richmond, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities. Once called the "Harlem of the South," much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the Richmond-Henrico Turnpike, now Interstate 95/64. In the 1950s, the interstate cut through Jackson Ward and permanently divided Jackson Ward in two pieces. Between 1955 and 1957, more than 7,000 people (900 families, of which 90% were black) were displaced. Seven hundred homes and businesses were demolished in Jackson Ward and 34 streets were rerouted.

I completely support the City of Richmond's application and continued efforts to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. This would improve overall quality of life and provide transportation solutions for VCU's diverse students, faculty, staff and community. It is an excellent opportunity to enhance safe and reliable transportation, one of our top priorities at VCU and the VCU Health System. With over 50,000 students, faculty, and staff, as well as hundreds of thousands of visitors to our academic and medical campuses each year, safe, reliable, and accessible transportation is critical. New connections open the possibilities to create opportunities for growth on both sides of the highway.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rao". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M" and a stylized "R".

Michael Rao  
President  
VCU and VCU Health System



October 5, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We are pleased to express our support of the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The Reconnect Jackson Ward project will address the goals of the RCP Program as it seeks to address the harms of 1950s interstate construction that displaced 7,000 families, of whom 90% were black, and bisected the thriving Jackson Ward neighborhood creating barriers of connectivity and accessibility.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to increase connectivity to other neighborhoods, and to provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. Moreover, it provides numerous learning opportunities for University of Richmond students including the expansion of current University projects. For example, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project directly connects with the University of Richmond's continued collaborative project, the East End Cemetery project (EECP). The EECP is a multi-institutional collaboration dedicated to documenting and curating African American history and culture in Richmond through cemetery restoration and research. This work has been conducted in collaboration with local community organizations and has evolved to include researching the lives of those buried in the burial grounds. Many of the individuals and family buried in the East End Cemetery either lived in or had family that lived in the corridor that was demolished by the highway.

We endorse this application. The proposed project has the potential for benefiting the Richmond community, in which the University resides, and offers numerous opportunities for student learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sylvia Gale".

Dr. Sylvia Gale

Bonner Center for Civic Engagement  
Tyler Haynes Commons, Suite 201  
270 Richmond Way  
University of Richmond, VA 23173  
(804) 484-1600



VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY

October 5, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Re: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program

Reconnect Jackson Ward – Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to express my utmost support of the City of Richmond’s planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the United States Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Through the RCP Program, the USDOT will provide \$1 billion over the next five years to remove, retrofit, or mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity and public health and well-being, as well as lead to increased displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that were once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities, with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility, and economic development for those communities.

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted its’ Richmond 300 Master Plan, a twenty-year plan to develop and grow the city. The plan focuses on how to make the city a more equitable, sustainable, and cohesive city, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities and resources that are affordable for all Richmonders. In accordance with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant so that it may advance a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1st Street, with spaces that create and sustain the vibrant Black culture and history present in the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of community facilities, transportation connections, and the potential for new development that include spaces for mixed-use, faith and contemplative, arts and entertainment, and youth engagement activities.

Once called the “Harlem of the South,” much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods declined after the construction of the highway, particularly north of the



VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY

interstate. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project has the opportunity to reconnect to the history of Jackson Ward, increase connectivity to other neighborhoods by making resident mobility easier and safer, and provide increased economic opportunities to the people of Jackson Ward. I wholeheartedly endorse this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HJ Lucas'.

Hakim J. Lucas, Ph.D.  
President & CEO  
Virginia Union University



September 27, 2022

Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary United States Department in Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

RE: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program Reconnect  
Jackson Ward-Richmond, Virginia

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am pleased to wholeheartedly support the City of Richmond planning grant application for the reconnect Jackson Ward project submitted and response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the United States Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Through this program, the United States Department of Transportation will provide one billion dollars over the next five years to remove retrofit and mitigate highways and other transportation facilities that act as barriers to opportunity in public health and well being as well as lead to increase displacement and environmental degradation. Priority will be given to projects located in historically disadvantaged areas that will once disrupted by the development of transportation facilities with the goal of increasing connectivity, accessibility, mobility and economic development for those communities. I am currently the president of the board of The Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia, which is located in the Jackson Ward area. We have been happy to partner with the City of Richmond in order to improve the community not only in Jackson Ward but also the City of Richmond. We are encouraged that the City of Richmond is trying to improve the Jackson Ward area and we are happy again to support this endeavor. It is our hope that through this grant this neighborhood will be once again revitalized and will take on a prominent role in the city and the State of Virginia. If there is any question, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monroe".

Monroe E. Harris, Jr., D.M.D.  
President of the board  
Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia



October 10, 2022

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write to express my support for the City of Richmond's planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

Our church, the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church, sits in the heart of the historic Jackson Ward. Sixth Mount Zion enjoys a heritage of dynamic fellowship and extraordinary leadership that dates to 1867, when the renowned Reverend John Jasper founded the church. Sixth Mount Zion was one of the first black churches to have an organized charity with a staff social worker to administer to the indigent of the community and city. Today we honor that heritage by not only worshipping together, but also by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, sheltering the homeless, and visiting the imprisoned together.

There is a great need for Jackson Ward to be reconnected. The 1950's highway that tore our neighborhood apart, remains a painful reminder of public policy that sought to destroy the community ties that empowered Richmond's African Americans. Sixth Mount Zion itself was threatened by the highway, before our congregation's advocacy saved the church from demolition. The church is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.



The highway also presents a significant barrier to people who live north of it. Our ministries serve residents who live north of the highway. We see how the physical division makes it harder to them to reach job opportunities downtown and to connect with services like ours.

Done well, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project will build over the highway in a manner that commemorates the long history of African American excellence in Jackson Ward and that provides our community with new economic, cultural, and spiritual opportunities. It will also be critical that the project not displace long-time residents. Members of our church provided input to the individuals leading the City of Richmond and Virginia's efforts to fund a reconnection project in a focus group in May of 2022. We hope to remain active in the planning process as the project moves forward.

This is a long-term project that will require the support of individuals and organizations with many different backgrounds, expertise, and resources. Funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program would help to ensure that all of the relevant parties are at the table. The City of Richmond and the Commonwealth of Virginia plan to use the grant to continue the community visioning process. The grant would also fund additional studies and analyses, including the preparation of an equitable development plan.

I hope that you will lend your support to the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

Sincerely,



Tyrone Nelson

**Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church**

Rev. Tyrone Nelson, Pastor | 14 W Duval Street, Richmond, VA 23220  
OFFICE: 804-648-7511 | FAX: 804-648-0904 | [www.smzbc.org](http://www.smzbc.org)



September 29, 2022

The Honorable Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I write on behalf of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Jackson Ward to recommend that the Department of Transportation support, with grant funding, the planning phase of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. Based upon the results of the Feasibility Study that was completed by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the City of Richmond, the leadership of our congregation believes that the next step in this process will be an important opportunity for this project. Your support will assist the planning team with identifying steps, processes, and policies that will outline the development of land and spaces that honor Jackson Ward's history and contribute to the health and well-being of current and future residents in this neighborhood.

For over 160 years the Ebenezer Baptist Church has served the people of Jackson Ward and the Richmond Metropolitan area. Established as the Third African Baptist Church in 1858, our congregation consisted of both free and enslaved African Americans who helped build the historic Jackson Ward into a celebrated district for Black life and culture. After the Civil War, the first public school for Black people in Richmond began in the basement of Ebenezer. In the decades that followed, the church played a central role in the life of Jackson Ward, founding and supporting the City's first kindergarten, several daughter churches, the Ebenezer Aid Society for the community, the Women's Missionary and Educational Circle, girl scout and boy scout troops, and many other organizations and ministries that have served and strengthened our community. Today, our church continues to thrive in its mission to love all people and empower our community.

Our church believes that your support will spark the necessary conversations about affordable housing, community diversity through neighborhood design, and accessible public transportation, as ways to address the historical wrongs that divided the neighborhood. To be sure, you learned about this history during your visit to Jackson Ward. Government leaders planned for the highway's path to cut through a thriving community of Black people. Between 1955 and 1957, more than 7,000 people, 90% of which were African American were displaced by the transportation project. Seven hundred homes and businesses were demolished in Jackson Ward and 34 streets were rerouted. Ebenezer members who once lived in this neighborhood still tell the stories of the harm caused by the politics and social circumstances that informed the highway construction.

Our church has been a partner in the Reconnect Jackson Ward project since its initial phases. Our pastor, the Reverend Dr. Adam L. Bond, Ph.D., and our Director of Stewardship and Community Development, the

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**216 W. Leigh Street, Richmond, VA 23220 • Phone: (804) 643-3366 • E-mail: [office@ebenezerrva.org](mailto:office@ebenezerrva.org)**

**EBENEZERRVA.ORG**



Reverend Aria Kirkland-Harris, served on the project's Steering Committee. Their leadership helped inform the creation of the September 2022 "Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study."<sup>1</sup> Additionally, in April 2022, our faith community hosted an event for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. We opened our space so that city and state officials could hear directly from the people who make up Jackson Ward. The planning team has been accessible and open to listening to the dreams and concerns of the community. Your support will sustain and further this effort.

A Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Pilot program would help public officials continue to hear from our church's members and from others who live, work, and worship in Jackson Ward. This project has the potential to facilitate dialogue that can raise awareness, foster healing, and promote growth within the City of Richmond. We see the vision for how public spaces devoted to celebrating the history of Jackson Ward can nurture people's connection to place and be an incubator for community development. We believe that this project can lead to public programming and spaces that are dedicated to youth enrichment, senior health and wellness activities, performance arts and cultural events, and learning opportunities that tell the story of Jackson Ward's contributions to Richmond. We also believe that the conversations, planning, and public gatherings required to reach that vision will be of great benefit to our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Adam L. Bond  
Pastor

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<sup>1</sup>"Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study," Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, Virginia Department of Transportation, and the City of Richmond (Sept. 2022), [https://reconnectjacksonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/RJW\\_FS\\_Report\\_2022-09-07DRAFT\\_v3.pdf](https://reconnectjacksonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/RJW_FS_Report_2022-09-07DRAFT_v3.pdf)

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September 6, 2022

The Honorable Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg  
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of Sports Backers, I'm writing in support of the City of Richmond's grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, submitted in response to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the USDOT's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The Sports Backers serve as the Richmond region's premier active living non-profit organization. We promote active living through large scale events, fitness programs and active transportation advocacy. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project provides an ideal location for our programming to provide healthy, active living opportunities. The Sports Backers and our Bike Walk RVA program commit to making this space accessible to people walking and biking through connections to the soon to be built 43-mile long multi-use Fall Line trail that will pass through Jackson Ward immediately adjacent to the proposed project.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to heal the wounds of Interstates 95 and 64 in the 1950's piercing this neighborhood into two separate areas with limited access across the heavily travelled highway. This project provides an opportunity to rebuild lost connections by building a bridge park with space for a variety of uses including spiritual, arts, entertainment and youth activities while receiving the benefits of passive green space. Once called the "Harlem of the South" much of the economic and social activity in Jackson Ward declined after the construction of the highway, especially north of the highway. By reconnecting the neighborhood and providing for safe and friendly pedestrian access over the interstate, there will be growth in economic and social connectivity that is desperately needed in our community.

We wholeheartedly support this application and the City of Richmond's continued efforts to improve its locally and regionally significant infrastructure and improve overall quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Lugbill', is written over the typed name.

Jon Lugbill  
Executive Director

September 7, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

**Re: City of Richmond Reconnecting Communities Pilot Application to Reconnect Jackson Ward**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

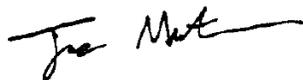
The Greater Washington Partnership strongly supports the City of Richmond's planning grant application to the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant program for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. The award of this grant will aid the City and State's shared effort to restore the urban fabric and reconnect a historically Black community to its downtown core.

The Partnership is a civic alliance of the leading employers in the Capital Region, from Baltimore to Richmond, who employ more than 300,000 residents and are committed to making this region the best place to live, work, and build a business. Richmond's Reconnect Jackson Ward project will help advance the Partnership's goals to [expand access to opportunity](#) and [remove barriers to mobility](#) throughout the Capital Region.

The construction of I-95 through downtown Richmond cut through the historically Black Jackson Ward community leading to forced displacement and decades of disinvestment as much of the neighborhood was physically cut-off from opportunities and amenities downtown. Consistent with the Richmond 300 Master Plan, the City of Richmond is applying for this grant in order to advance planning for a new connection over I-95 between Belvidere Street and North 1st Street, with new community spaces that will help sustain and create new opportunities for the vibrant Black culture and history of the community. The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward project will increase connectivity to other neighborhoods and improve resident's mobility and has the potential to reverse decades of community disinvestment and help long-time homeowners of Jackson Ward build intergenerational wealth. The Partnership urges your favorable consideration of the City of Richmond's application for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant program.

Sincerely,



Joe McAndrew  
Vice President, Government Affairs & Infrastructure





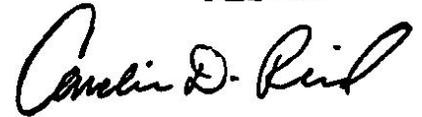
hindered from economic progress by transportation infrastructure for the purpose of funding the City's "Reconnect Jackson Ward project;"

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby expresses its support for the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnect Communities Pilot Program to aid the restoration of communities hindered from economic progress by transportation infrastructure for the purpose of funding the City's "Reconnect Jackson Ward project" and, to the extent permitted by law, commits to the 20 percent matching funds if the project is approved for funding.

**A TRUE COPY:  
TESTE:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Camille D. Reed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

**City Clerk**



# City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
2nd Floor of City Hall  
Richmond, VA 23219  
www.rva.gov

## Item Request

File Number:

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### O & R Request

**DATE:** 16 August 2021

**EDITION:** 1

**TO:** The Honorable Members of City Council

**THROUGH:** The Honorable Levar M. Stoney, Mayor

**THROUGH:** J. E. Lincoln Saunders, Chief Administrative Officer

**THROUGH:** Sharon L. Ebert, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Economic Development and Planning

**FROM:** Kevin J. Vonck, Director, Department of Planning and Development Review

**RE:** Request to City Council support of a planning grant application for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

**ORD. OR RES. No.** **TBD**

**PURPOSE:** To express the City Council's support for the City's participation in the United States Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities Program (RCP) for a planning grant for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

**REASON:** An approved Council Resolution indicating the Council's request for participation and support of the identified potential project and commitment to provide the 20% matching funds if the federal funding is approved is necessary to participate in the FY22 RCP grant program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Department of Planning and Review recommends approval of this resolution.

**BACKGROUND:** The US Department of Transportation has published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for \$1 billion in grant funding beginning FY22 and ending in FY26 through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). IIJA established the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot discretionary grant program. This program dedicates funds to support planning grants and capital construction grants to restore communities that were cut off from economic

progress by transportation infrastructure. Funding can be used to restore connectivity through removal, retrofit, mitigation, or replacement of eligible infrastructure facilities. The City is developing a planning grant application. The maximum planning grant award is \$2 million; however, US DOT anticipates grants may range from \$100,000 to \$2 million. The deadline for this application is October 13, 2022.

Eligible facilities are a road, street, highway, port, airport, bridge, rail line, or other transportation facility that creates a barrier to communities. A barrier to community is characterized by a high volume of traffic, high speeds, grade separations, or a design that creates unsafe conditions or is impossible to cross. A barrier also reduces access to everyday destinations. There is a local cost matching requirement of 20% for planning grants. Matching funds can include non-federal sources of funds from the state, local government, philanthropy, private donations, or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include community members' time, donated materials, or pro bono work by third parties. Eligible planning grant activities include public engagement, visioning, place based strategies, planning studies, conceptual designs, environmental reviews, land use and zoning reform, transit-oriented development planning and housing planning. Removing, retrofitting, or replacing a facility can include, but is not limited to, projects such as creating high quality public transit, capping or lids over roads or major highways, creating pedestrian walkways and overpasses, or linear parks.

All projects will be rated using the merit criteria buckets of 1) Equity, Environmental Justice, Community Engagement, 2) Mobility and Community Connectivity, 3) Community Based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships, and 4) Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity. Further evaluation will include a technical and financial component. The US DOT Secretary will make the final selections with recommendations from the senior review team.

The Richmond 300 Master Plan sets forth recommendations and policy to guide the future growth of the city. One main recommendation of the plan is to study the feasibility of building a park, road, or another type of connection over I-95 and I-64 to reconnect Jackson Ward with North Jackson Ward. I-95/I-64 meets the US DOT 'eligible transportation facility' criteria as a major highway that is characterized by high speeds, grade separation, and is impossible to cross. The feasibility study has concluded there are several options for capping the highway.

The next step is to apply for a planning grant with the US Department of Transportation to continue planning work to further the reconnection project. The planning tasks may include but are not limited to a traffic analysis and impact study, an environmental review, conceptual design and preliminary engineering, local history and archival research, and community engagement. The planning funding would set the City to apply for capital grants to implement the vision of reconnecting Jackson Ward.

The intent of this resolution is to provide City Council authorization to participate in the 2022 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP) grant and to commit 20% matching funds if the federal funding is awarded for the project.

**FISCAL IMPACT/COST:** No cost for preparing the application. The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment has hired a consultant to assist with the grant application. In FY24 through FY25 up to \$400,000 may be need to provide the 20% match, depending on the final award amount from the US DOT..

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:** Not participating in this program eliminates the possibility of receiving up to \$1,600,000 (80%) in federal infrastructure funds for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

**BUDGET AMENDMENT NECESSARY:** Not at this time. It is anticipated that the City will allocate the required 20% matching City funds from DPW funds and/or PDR funds in FY24 thru FY25 when and if the grant is awarded by US DOT.

**REVENUE TO CITY:** \$1,600,000 if grant application is approved.

**DESIRED EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon adoption.

**REQUESTED INTRODUCTION DATE:** September 12, 2022

**CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING DATE:** September 26, 2022

**REQUESTED AGENDA:** Consent

**RECOMMENDED COUNCIL COMMITTEE:** Land Use, Housing and Transportation  
(September 20, 2022)

**CONSIDERATION BY OTHER GOVERNMENT ENTITIES:**

**AFFECTED AGENCIES:** Public works, Law Department, Planning & Development Review, Economic Development, Finance Department, Budget & Strategic Planning

**RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING ORD. OR RES.:** ORD. 2020-236 (adoption of Richmond 300)

**REQUIRED CHANGES TO WORK PROGRAM(S):** None

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Draft Ordinance

**STAFF:** Maritza Mercado Pechin, Deputy Director, Dept. of Planning and Development Review  
(p) 804.646.6348 (e) [maritza.pechin@rva.gov](mailto:maritza.pechin@rva.gov)

**APPENDIX C: Feasibility Study**



# RECONNECT JACKSON WARD

FEASIBILITY STUDY | SEPTEMBER 2022



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study was prepared by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, the Virginia Department of Transportation, and the City of Richmond with support from a study team of consultant engineers, planners, landscape architects and community engagement specialists, in addition to a steering committee comprised of community leaders. Key preparers of this document are listed below. Additionally, the completion of this study would not have been possible without the participation and assistance of different stakeholders and individuals from the Jackson Ward community and surrounding neighborhoods that provided support and feedback that made this study possible.

### LEAD AGENCIES

#### **Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment of the Secretary of Transportation**

Ronique Day, *Deputy Director*

#### **Virginia Department of Transportation**

Ben Mannell, AICP, *Assistant Director of Planning*  
Transportation and Mobility Planning Division

#### **City of Richmond**

Maritza Pechin, AICP, *Deputy Director*  
Office of Equitable Development

Yessenia Revilla, *Planner*  
Office of Equitable Development

Dironna Moore Clarke, *Administrator*  
Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility

### STUDY TEAM

Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP  
Ebony Walden Consulting  
Land Planning and Design Associates

Storefront for Community Design  
On Point Communications

### STEERING COMMITTEE

Janis Allen  
Anedra Bourne  
Nate Goodenow  
Zarina Fazaldin  
Max Hepp-Buchanan  
Aria Kirkland-Harris  
Jerome Legions  
Billy McMullen  
Leighton Powell  
Desi Wynter

Adam Bond  
Marland Buckner  
Michael Hallmark  
Mecca Harris  
Jim Hill  
David Lambert  
Donte McCutchen  
Charlene Pitchford  
Ron Stallings

### COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Charlene Pitchford  
Ashlee "Dreame" Boyd

Deloris Bailey

# RECONNECT JACKSON WARD

## FEASIBILITY STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

September 2022

### Why Reconnect?

Jackson Ward represented a thriving economic center for African Americans. However, construction of I-95/64 led to the physical and economic separation of Jackson Ward, and the years that followed were highlighted by continued disinvestment and destruction.

Today, the differences between the two sides of Jackson Ward are significant. Compared to the south of the interstate, the area north of the interstate experiences higher unemployment, lower home ownership rates, and significantly higher levels of poverty.

The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study was undertaken to identify solutions to improve access to north of Jackson Ward and to reconnect Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods, separated by I-95/64, through the creation of freeway lid that could contain new development, transportation connections, and public spaces. Reconnecting over the highway is an opportunity to rebuild and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward and connect both sides with the resources necessary to properly support themselves.

Reconnect Jackson Ward provides a unique opportunity to reconnect the history and culture of Jackson Ward to the Richmond community while physically reconnecting the two sides.



### Project Location

The project area generally extends from the Belvidere Street Bridge over I-95/64 to east of the North 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge over I-95/64. This encompasses Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods.





# What We Heard

Through the variety of outreach and engagement events conducted over the course of the Reconnect Jackson Ward feasibility study process, community members expressed a number of common themes that were carefully considered during the feasibility assessment and through the identification of potential next steps and future considerations. The following subjects received the greatest attention and will continue to be kept evaluated as the project develops:

- Concerns about potential gentrification and displacement, and the potential for this project to enable further gentrification and displacement if proper controls are not put in place.
- Concerns about reparations to address past harms and how to ensure that the Reconnect Jackson Ward project benefits African Americans
- The inclusion of history, arts, and culture amenities that reflect the African American experience
- The cost, construction, and completion schedule for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.
- Identifying potential funding for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.
- Support for mixed-use, mixed-income affordable housing opportunities, homeownership opportunities, and ongoing plans for redeveloping the Jackson Ward neighborhood north of I-95/64.

Overall, the community expressed one major common theme - the project to reconnect Jackson Ward must elevate and expand Black ownership, history, and culture in Jackson Ward. As this project continues to advance from feasibility study phase, planners and engineers should work to address the concerns listed above through design, policy interventions, programming, and funding.



# Phasing and Cost Analysis

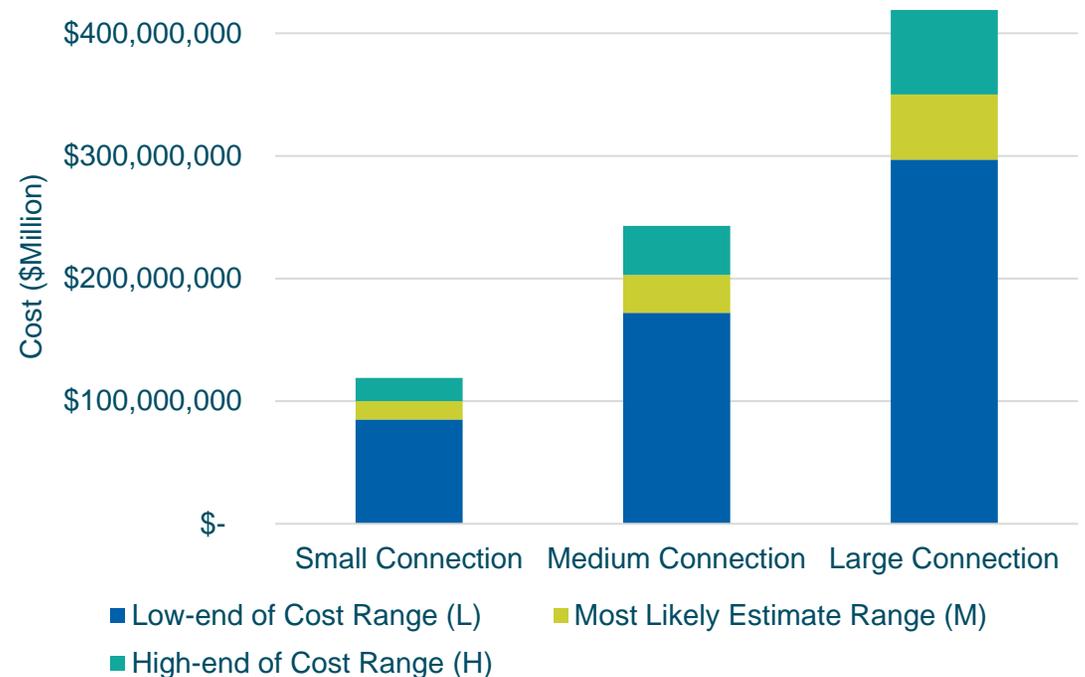
Considering the substantial investment that would be anticipated to implement a new connection, the feasibility study assessment included an evaluation of the developable areas to identify potential opportunities to phase the implementation of a future project as a large, medium, or small connection. The most efficient delivery of the project would be to construct the large connection concurrently; however, opportunities for project phasing were explored that would allow for the design and implementation of more modest connections that still would provide opportunities to reconnect to the history of people and place, support economic vitality and growth, and increase connectivity to community facilities. Three phasing plans were identified: large connection (approximately 204,000 square feet - shown in the figure on the top right), medium connection (approximately 119,000 square feet), and a small connection (approximately 59,000 square feet).

A Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost analysis was conducted to provide a cost range that represents the reasonable construction and programming cost related to project development but is not specific to design or programmatic elements. The range of implementation costs for these phasing opportunities is identified in the below right table. The ROM cost identifies a low-end cost estimate, most likely estimate, and high-end cost estimate for each option. These cost estimates are not specific but are estimations that are to be used to guide future project implementation.

## Design Area Plan Concept – Large Connection



- LEGEND
- Possible Park Area
  - Possible Gateway Area
  - Possible Buildings
  - Community Landmarks
  - ➡ Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
  - ➡ Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
  - ➡ Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
  - Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
  - Lid/Covered Highway Area



# Framework Plan

A Framework Plan was established through community input and engagement to inform future engineering and design elements as the project advances. The conceptual design reconnects the historic street grid and creates four thematic “blocks” within the project area, a Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income Commercial/Housing Space, a Youth Engagement Space, a Faith & Contemplative Space, and an Art & Entertainment Space. The themes were identified through public input and are designed to reflect the context and history of Jackson Ward, allowing visitors to learn the story of Jackson Ward.

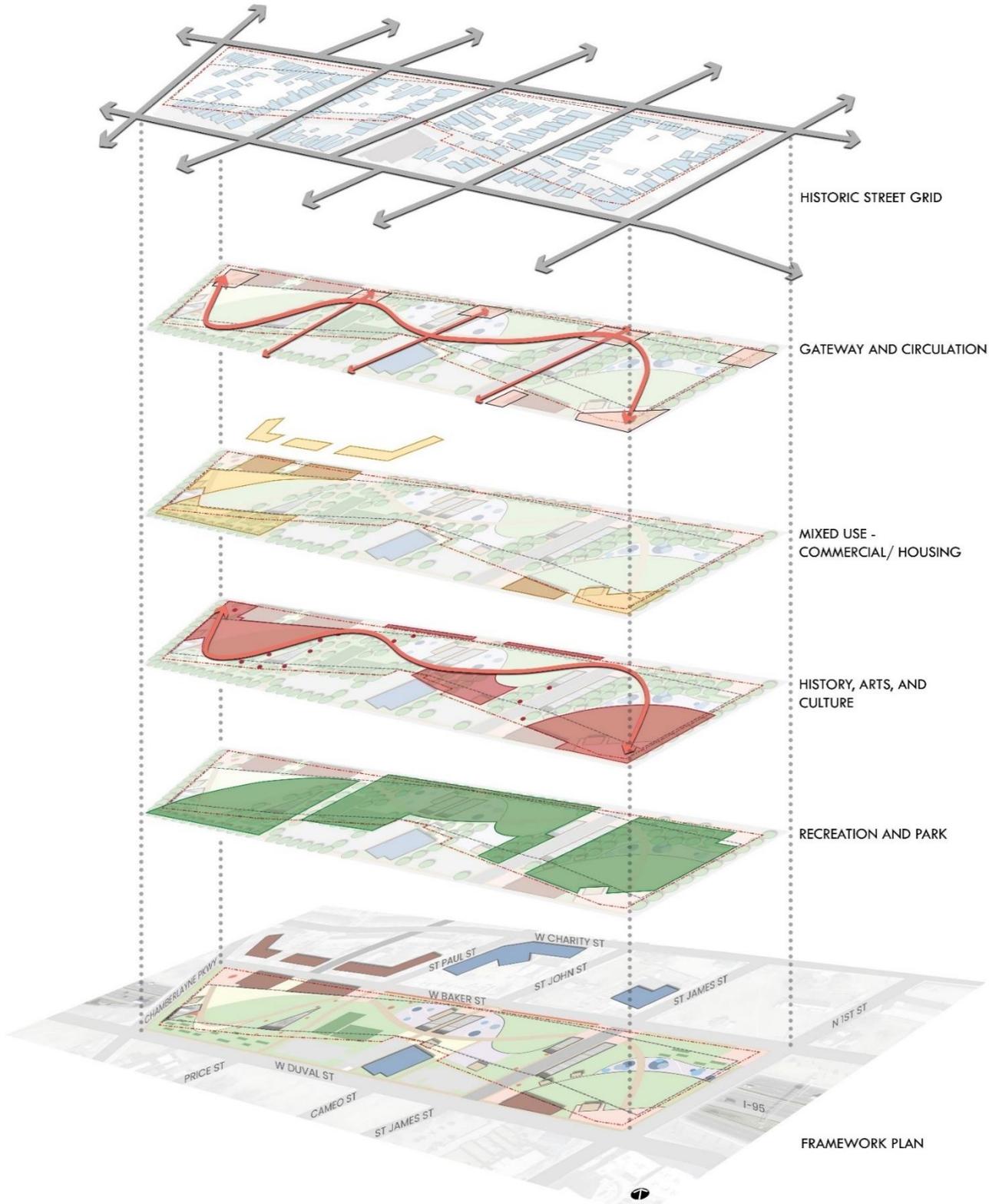


## Primary Framework Themes



# Exploded Axonometric Drawing

From the Framework Plan, an exploded axonometric (axon) drawing was created to highlight specific elements included in the design plan and show the connection between those elements and the overall plan. As shown in the axon drawing, thematic elements of the design will be used throughout the project location combining different uses and activities to create a multi-functional community space. The historic street grid and circulation layers are utilized to show the project's connection to a historic Jackson Ward, as well as the potential movement throughout the space.



## Recommendations and Next Steps

Working with OIPI and VDOT, the City of Richmond will be continuing to engage the public and work to advance the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. The City is currently pursuing a planning grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to seek funding to develop a refined plan for reconnecting Jackson Ward and conduct historical research, environmental assessments, traffic impact analyses, and continued community engagement. The goal of these additional recommended planning activities, listed below, is to design a project that is fiscally feasible while achieving the goal of reconnecting the community:

- Additional studies and analyses
  - Conduct traffic analysis and impact study
  - Determine environmental impacts and prepare environmental review to ensure compliance for use of Federal funding
- Preliminary engineering and design
  - Utilizing designers with experience planning Black spaces
- Local History and Culture Archival Research
- Philanthropic Coordination
- Continued Community Engagement

These activities are recommended to successfully advance the development of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project towards future next steps and implementation. In addition to these recommended continued planning activities, this study includes research and recommendations for consideration to address community concerns that were raised surrounding the issues of the potential for gentrification and displacement, as well as the considerations for reparations to address past harms. These concerns were mentioned throughout the process of community engagement and focused on providing affordable housing and mixed-use development as well as reparations for the Black community members and descendants who were displaced and suffered as a result of the interstate construction. These are important considerations for the future development of Jackson Ward and the City of Richmond is actively exploring existing anti-displacement, gentrification, and reparations movements across the United States to help guide potential policy and regulations, much of which extends beyond the bounds of this feasibility assessment. This research and recommendations can be found in **Appendix D**.

## Learn More

More detailed information regarding specific project elements is available in the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study. Below is a list of where relevant information can be located in the Feasibility Study:

Project Area and Location	<b>Sections 1.1-1.2</b>
History of Jackson Ward	<b>Section 1.4</b>
Concurrent Projects in Jackson Ward Area	<b>Section 1.5</b>
Case Studies	<b>Section 1.6</b>
Community Engagement	<b>Sections 2.1-2.8</b>
Existing Conditions of Project Area	<b>Section 3.1</b>
Technical Feasibility of Project	<b>Section 3.2</b>
Recommended Framework	<b>Section 3.3</b>
Conceptual Framework Plan	<b>Section 3.3.1</b>
Cost Estimates	<b>Section 3.4</b>
Project Phasing and Implementation	<b>Section 4.1</b>
Funding Opportunities	<b>Section 4.2</b>
Anti-Displacement, Gentrification, and Reparations: Research and Recommendations	<b>Appendix D</b>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	ES-1
-------------------------	------

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	i
-------------------------	---

<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
----------------------------	----------

<b>1.1 Study Area and Project Location.....</b>	<b>2</b>
---	----------

<b>1.2 Community Profile .....</b>	<b>2</b>
------------------------------------	----------

<b>1.3 Study Vision.....</b>	<b>5</b>
------------------------------	----------

<b>1.4 Brief History of Jackson Ward .....</b>	<b>5</b>
--	----------

1.4.1 Economic and Social Development .....	7
---	---

1.4.2 Historical Redlining Map in Relation to Study Area.....	8
---	---

1.4.3 The Highway .....	11
-------------------------	----

1.4.4 The Years After .....	11
-----------------------------	----

<b>1.5 Concurrent Projects.....</b>	<b>11</b>
-------------------------------------	-----------

1.5.1 Jackson Ward Community Plan .....	11
---	----

1.5.2 Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth .....	12
--	----

1.5.3 JXN Project .....	12
-------------------------	----

1.5.4 Richmond I-95 Bridges Rehabilitation.....	12
---	----

1.5.5 Belvidere Street Interchange Realignment and Safety Improvements .....	14
--	----

1.5.6 Calhoun Center Renovation.....	14
--------------------------------------	----

1.5.7 Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground.....	14
--	----

1.5.8 Public Art Charles S. Gilpin Community Farm .....	14
---	----

1.5.9 Proposed City Old & Historic Districts Expansion and/or Design Overlay .....	14
--	----

1.5.10 Fall Line Trail .....	15
------------------------------	----

1.5.11 DC2RVA S-Line .....	15
----------------------------	----

1.5.12 Potential N-S BRT Routes .....	15
---------------------------------------	----

1.5.13 City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan.....	16
---	----

1.5.14 5 <sup>th</sup> Street Bicycle Lanes .....	16
---	----

1.5.15 Leigh Street Streetscape Improvements.....	16
---	----

1.5.16 Cameo Street Development.....	16
--------------------------------------	----

1.5.17 Richmond Connects.....	16
-------------------------------	----

<b>1.6 Case Studies of Freeway Lid/Cap Projects.....</b>	<b>17</b>
--	-----------

1.6.1 Klyde Warren Park.....	20
------------------------------	----

1.6.2 The Cap at Union Station.....	21
-------------------------------------	----

- 1.6.3 Kanawha Plaza ..... 22
- 1.6.4 Freeway Park..... 23
- 2 STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ..... 24**
  - 2.1 Steering Committee Meetings..... 25**
  - 2.2 Community Meeting Events ..... 25**
    - 2.2.1 Community Event #1 ..... 26
    - 2.2.2 Community Event #2..... 27
    - 2.2.3 Community Event #3..... 28
  - 2.3 Pop-Up Events..... 31**
  - 2.4 Focus Groups ..... 31**
  - 2.5 One-on-One Interviews ..... 33**
  - 2.6 Community Ambassadors..... 33**
  - 2.7 Community Surveys..... 33**
  - 2.8 Additional Communication and Outreach ..... 33**
  - 2.9 Summary of Stakeholder and Community Engagement ..... 34**
- 3 FEASIBILITY ..... 35**
  - 3.1 Existing Conditions..... 36**
    - 3.1.1 Land Use and Community Facilities ..... 36
    - 3.1.2 Historic Sites and Cultural Resources..... 38
    - 3.1.3 Existing Transportation Infrastructure and Adjacent Projects ..... 40
  - 3.2 Technical Feasibility of Reconnect Jackson Ward ..... 40**
    - 3.2.1 Engineering Constraints and Parameters ..... 40
    - 3.2.2 Structural Assessment Boundary Areas ..... 43
    - 3.2.3 Design Assumptions and Developable Lid Areas ..... 43
    - 3.2.4 Feasibility Assessment ..... 49
  - 3.3 Recommended Design Framework ..... 52**
    - 3.3.1 Exploded Axon and Conceptual Visualization ..... 56
  - 3.4 Planning-Level Cost Estimate..... 61**
    - 3.4.1 Structural Costs ..... 62
    - 3.4.2 Adjacent Approach Work ..... 62
    - 3.4.3 Allowances/Contingencies ..... 62
    - 3.4.4 Construction Engineering and Inspection ..... 62
    - 3.4.5 PE/Engineering Design ..... 62
    - 3.4.6 VDOT Oversight..... 62
    - 3.4.7 Inflation ..... 62

**4 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS AND NEXT STEPS.....63**

**4.1 Potential Project Phasing and Implementation Strategies.....63**

**4.2 Funding Opportunities.....65**

**4.3 Anti-Displacement, Gentrification, and Reparations .....65**

**4.4 Conclusion.....66**

**5 REFERENCES.....68**

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1. Project Location and Study Area .....3

Figure 2. Jackson Ward Community Profile.....4

Figure 3. Study Area and 1871 Political Ward Boundary .....6

Figure 4. 1937 Richmond Development Designation Map .....10

Figure 5. Concurrent Projects .....13

Figure 6. Known US Freeway Lids .....17

Figure 7. Large Connection Area Plan.....29

Figure 8. Design Framework Priority Themes .....30

Figure 9. Land Use and Community Facilities .....37

Figure 10. Historic Sites and Cultural Resources .....39

Figure 11. Existing Transportation Infrastructure.....41

Figure 12: Structural Assessment Boundary Areas .....44

Figure 13. Historic Street and Neighborhood Configuration .....45

Figure 14. Developable Lid Areas.....47

Figure 15. Representative Sections .....48

Figure 16. Feasible Developable Lid Areas .....50

Figure 17. Design Area Plan Concept – Large Connection .....53

Figure 18. Design Area Plan Concept – Medium Connection .....54

Figure 19. Design Area Plan Concept – Small Connection .....55

Figure 20. Recommended Design Framework Plan .....57

Figure 21. Exploded Axonometric Diagram .....58

Figure 22. Recommended Framework Plan Conceptual Rendering .....60

Figure 23. ROM Cost Estimate Ranges.....61

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Known US Freeway Lids.....	18
Table 2. Historic Sites in Study Area .....	38
Table 3. Summary of Structural Assessment Boundary Areas .....	43
Table 4. Structural Design Assumptions .....	43
Table 5: Load Levels and Superstructure Support Depths .....	46
Table 6. Feasibility Assessment Summary .....	49

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Appendix B: Cost Estimate Ranges

Appendix C: Potential Phasing Visualization

Appendix D: Anti-Displacement, Gentrification, and Reparations: Research and Recommendations

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
BHC	Better Housing Coalition
CLT	Maggie Walker Community Land Trust
CoR	City of Richmond
OMBD	City of Richmond Office of Minority Business Development
DRPT	Department of Rail & Public Transportation
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FHWA	The Federal Highway Administration
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
GGA	Georgia General Assembly
GRTC	Greater Richmond Transit Company
HUD	The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
LRTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan

MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Street and Highways
NCDOT	North Carolina Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
OGN	Office of Gavin Newson
OIPI	The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment
PHA	Partnership for Affordable Housing
PRCF	Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities
RCP	Reconnecting Communities Pilot
ROM	Rough Order of Magnitude
RRHA	Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority
RRTPO	Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization
S&B	Structure and Bridge
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
STARS	Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions
TIF	Tax-Increment Finance
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
LISC	Virginia Local Initiative Support Corporation
VDRPT	Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation
USDOT	Department of Transportation

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIPI), in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the City of Richmond (CoR), has undertaken this feasibility study to develop options to reconnect Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods, a historic African American community that was physically and economically separated by Interstates 95 and 64 (I-95/64) since the 1950s. Born out of the Richmond 300 Master Plan's vision for new infrastructure to reconnect Jackson Ward, the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study seeks to engage the community to evaluate and develop viable options for new transportation connections and public spaces in this area.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the reconnection of Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods, separated by I-95/64, through the creation of new development, transportation connections, and public spaces. The goal of the study is to produce a credible technical analysis that identifies design opportunities and constraints; provides a range of development and structural considerations; and generates viable cost estimates that can lead to implementation. This community-driven, collaborative study process has been informed by community engagement, stakeholder outreach, and public involvement efforts that also identified the need for any future improvements to address past harms against the African American community that were displaced by the highway project that bifurcated the Jackson Ward neighborhood.

## 1.1 Study Area and Project Location

The study area for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study is located in the City of Richmond, the state capital of Virginia. Illustrated in **Figure 1**, the study area encompasses Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods, generally extending to N. Lombardy Street to the west, School Street and Valley Road to north, 7<sup>th</sup> Street to the east, and E. Broad Street to the south. The study area was generally established based on US Census Tract boundaries, including Census Tracts 301, 302, 305, 402, and 403, combined with a half-mile buffer from the project location, representing an approximate walking distance from where possible improvements were identified as potentially occurring based on the Richmond 300 Master Plan. The initial bounds of the project location, in which potential improvements have been evaluated as part of this feasibility study, generally extend from the Belvidere Street Bridge over I-95/64 to east of the N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge over I-95/64.

The study area has been established for the purposes of data gathering and analysis to evaluate the potential benefits and impacts that could occur due to any improvements that could be implemented as a result of this study. Three of the study area Census Tracts (301, 302, and 402) are Federally Designated Opportunity Zones. The Opportunity Zone designation encourages investment in low-income communities in order to spur economic and job growth, as well as give access to extra development funding and tax benefits. There are a number of other projects and planning efforts underway in Jackson Ward within the study area vicinity, which are detailed in **Section 1.5**. This feasibility study has been informed by these projects and studies, which include the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority's ongoing Jackson Ward Community Plan, offer potential opportunities for synergy to reach an informed, shared vision for the future of the neighborhood.

## 1.2 Community Profile

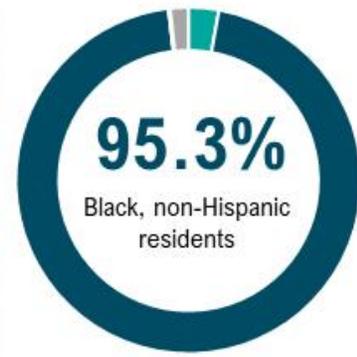
Demographic data compiled for the Jackson Ward neighborhood illustrates the stark contrast between the two sides of the community that are divided by I-95/64, as shown in **Figure 2**. The two sides of Jackson Ward have similar populations and number of households; however, compared to the area south of the interstate, the area north of the interstate has less than half of the percentage of people in the labor force, more than double the unemployment rate, more than double the percentage of households below the poverty level, and the median household income is nearly one third. This data illustrates the need for improved connectivity, as the construction of I-95 through Jackson Ward has resulted in the economic isolation of the community to the north, which has been physically separated from resources and economic access compared to the area to the south.



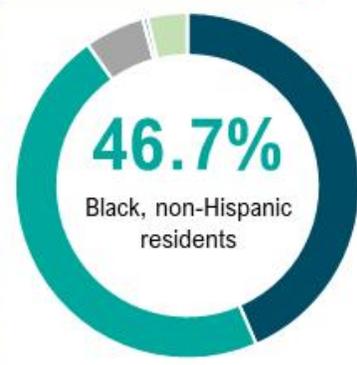
Figure 1. Project Location and Study Area



North of I-95



South of I-95



Total Study Area Community Profile	
Black, non-Hispanic Residents	40.60%
Unemployment	13.50%
Below Poverty Line	44.90%
Renter-Occupied Units	73.20%
Median Income	\$27,295

Figure 2. Jackson Ward Community Profile

### 1.3 Study Vision

Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods represent one of the nation's most important centers of Black cultural and economic vitality. Reconnecting over the highway is an opportunity to repair, rebuild, and reknit the two sides of Jackson Ward, that were divided in the 1950s by the construction of the interstate highway, through the creation of transportation connections, community spaces, and the potential for new development.

From a design, engineering, and planning perspective, reconnecting Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods is envisioned to follow a phased approach for implementation based on the evaluation and prioritization of identified feasible connections that meet the project vision and goals and the availability of funding opportunities.

Based on input from the community, the vision for Reconnect Jackson Ward is as follows:

- A place for Richmond to heal and unite. “Connecting the injustice of the past,” north and south Jackson Ward will be united with a new architecture to our past.
- A place for community gathering. Jackson Ward will be reconnected with community amenities, green spaces, paths, programmable spaces, and new development sites that “contribute to revitalization and redevelopment.”
- A place of arts and culture for all. “Encouraging cultural growth and discovery,” Jackson Ward will be reconnected to the history of the community and celebrate the culture of all Richmonders.
- A place that elevates the community and the City of Richmond. A reconnection of Jackson Ward will “fade the freeway from the foreground to the background.”
- A place where the ideals of inclusion, unification, and access for everyone are freely expressed, while “keeping Black history alive.”

### 1.4 Brief History of Jackson Ward

In 1793, the City of Richmond began annexing large tracts of land from Henrico County, namely Duval and Coutt's additions, once part of William Byrd III's vast holdings. In 1871, Jackson Ward was established as a new sixth voting district within the City of Richmond, illustrated in **Figure 3**, specifically designated to include a majority of Richmond's African American population (NPS, 2021). This land, which would eventually comprise the larger Jackson Ward neighborhood, was initially inhabited by immigrants of German and Jewish descent as well as free and enslaved African Americans, like Abraham Skipwith. In 1793, Abraham Skipwith, a free black man, purchased property and built a house at 400 West Duval Street in the Jackson Ward. In 1800, the Richmond population was composed of 2,293 enslaved blacks and 607 free blacks, many of whom made their homes within the boundaries of the neighborhood. Following the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, the black population in Jackson Ward continued to grow (Scott, 1950).

Because of the restrictive laws and regulations that made it difficult for African American residents to find opportunities outside of the Jackson Ward community, the area became one of the most vibrant Black cultural and business centers in the United States. In many ways, Jackson Ward became its own city within Richmond, full of business and commercial activities, churches, theaters, and other cultural establishments, which were formed and run by Black residents. In the 1920s and 1940s, Jackson Ward was known as both the “Harlem of the South” and the “Black Wall Street” (HJWA, 2021).

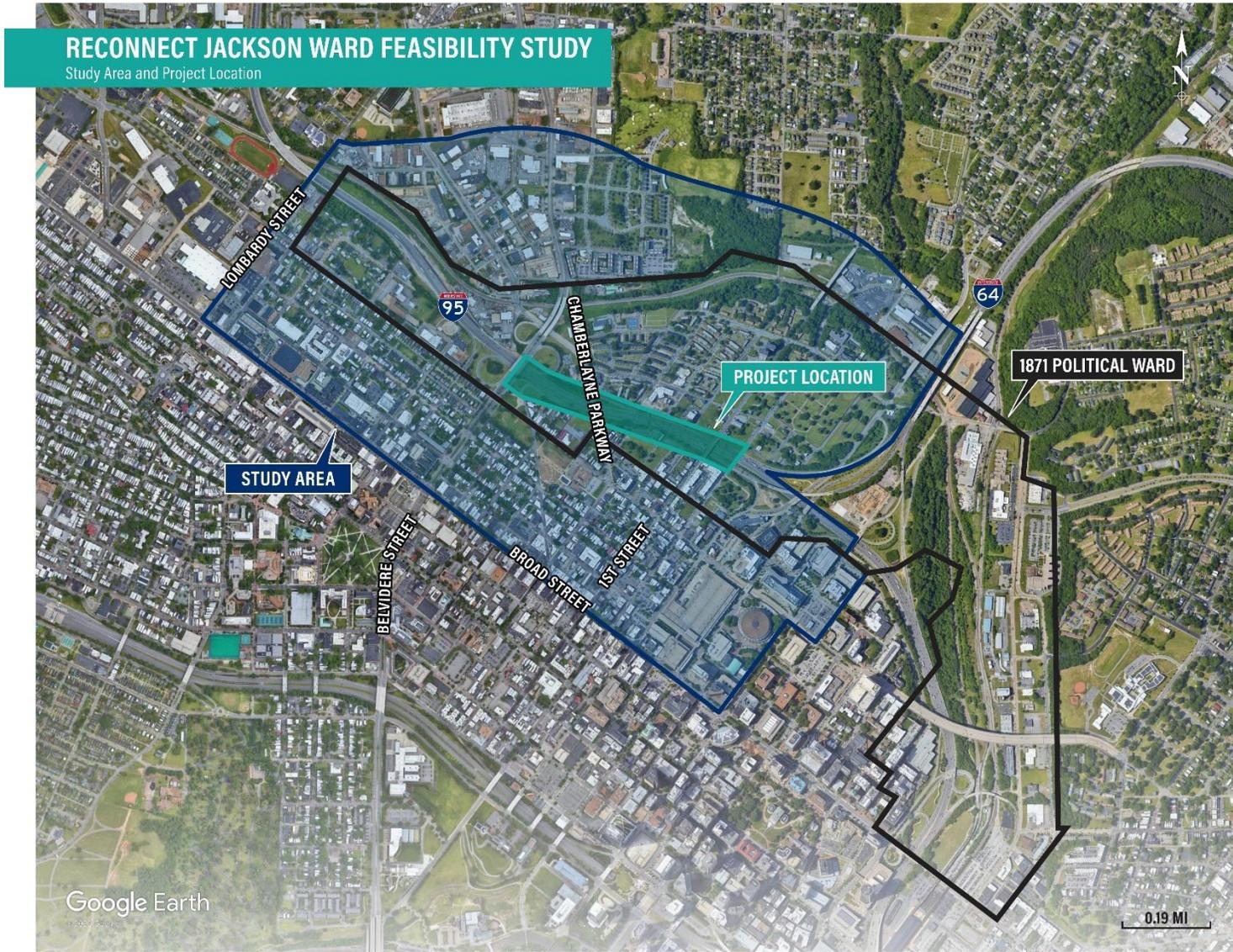
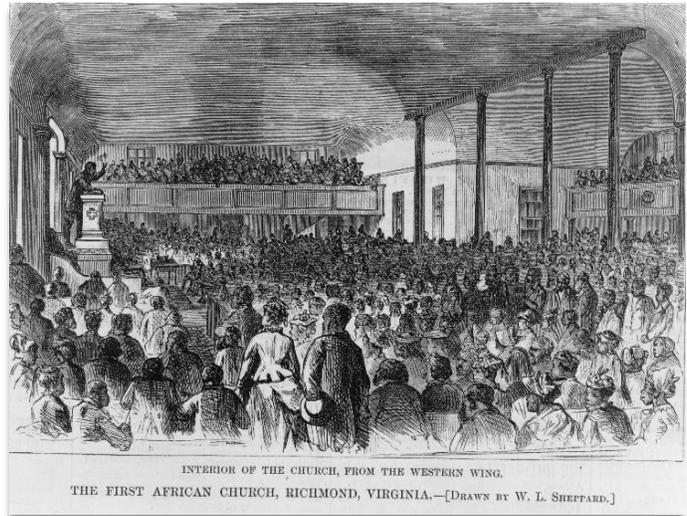


Figure 3. Study Area and 1871 Political Ward Boundary

### 1.4.1 Economic and Social Development

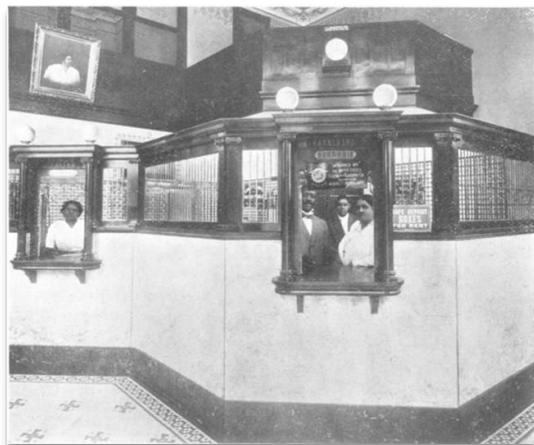
Churches heavily influenced the lives and successes of Jackson Ward's residents. Prior to emancipation, African Americans could only attend white churches and when they were allowed to have their own churches they were required to have a white minister. In 1840, the white congregation of First Baptist Church erected a new church building and gave the old sanctuary to its African American members who established their own church, First African Baptist Church, with a white minister (The Valentine, 2021). Ebenezer Baptist Church, an off-shoot of First African Baptist Church, was established in Jackson Ward in 1855 with a congregation of free and enslaved members and a white minister. In 1867, John Jasper became the first black man to organize a church, Sixth Mount Zion, in Richmond. The congregation relocated to Jackson Ward in 1869, where it remains today in a sanctuary designed by African American architect, Charles Thaddeus Russell. By 1920, there were a total of 58 African American churches across the City of Richmond (Hill, 1920).



*Congregation of the First African Baptist Church*

There were a few small, black-owned businesses, such as barbers, tailors and blacksmiths, in Jackson Ward prior to emancipation but the greatest growth occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One example of the many black entrepreneurs in Jackson Ward is A. D. Price. Alfred "A.D." Price was a former slave who moved to the city in 1870 and trained to become a blacksmith and wheelwright. In the early 1880s, he established a self-named funeral business which grew to become one of the largest black-owned funeral businesses in the country. In 1894, Price became one of the first funeral directors in Virginia to receive his embalming license (HMDb, 2007). Around the same time, a group of community leaders came together to form the Southern Aid Life Insurance Company. The first African American owned and operated insurance company in the United States. The business offered Jackson Ward's residents access to insurance protection they were not usually afforded. In 1905, Price became the President of the company and was able to grow it to more than 300 employees across the state by 1937 (Southern Aid Society of Virginia, 1893-1977).

Restricted access to banking made it almost impossible for African Americans to secure loans and other financial opportunities to improve their homes or establish businesses. Between 1888



***Maggie L. Walker inside the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank***

and 1920, six African American owned and operated banks were opened in Richmond (Chataigne, 1883-84). Established in 1888, the Savings Bank of the Grand Fountain United Order of True Reformers Bank was the first black-owned bank chartered in Jackson Ward and the United States. Best known, perhaps, is the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, opened in 1903 by Maggie L. Walker. Walker became the first African American woman to charter a bank in the United States. St. Luke, as well as the five other banks in Jackson Ward, would be instrumental in helping residents obtain mortgages they would otherwise be unable to secure. From 1903 to 1920, St. Luke would provide more than 600 mortgages to residents of Richmond (NPS, 2022).

Jackson Ward's emersion as a place for entertainment and performance helped to give the community its name as "the Harlem of the South." In 1913, the Hippodrome Theater was opened as a vaudeville and movie theater, but subsequently became a destination point for African American entertainment and nightlife. Throughout the 30s and 40s, prominent African American entertainers like Duke Wellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, and Nat King Cole, among many others, could be found on stage at the Hippodrome. Jackson Ward's own Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, a singer, actor, and tap dancer who would become one of the first African American performers to have a solo act, could regularly be found on the Hippodrome stage.

Professions that had once been only attainable by whites were now being practiced by blacks whose offices were located in and around the Jackson Ward community. Jackson Ward residents were now attorneys, druggists, nurses, and physicians. They owned their own butcheries, grocery stores, and barbershops. By the 1930's, there were more than 8,000 African Americans living, working, and thriving in Jackson Ward (Taylor, 1994). This growing professional and business leadership in Jackson Ward formed the locus of the civil rights movement in Richmond and helped to unmake segregation. Many of the leading desegregation cases were filed by the Jackson Ward law firm of Hill Robinson & Martin, and later Hill Tucker & Marsh under the leadership of senior partner, Oliver W. Hill.

#### **1.4.2 Historical Redlining Map in Relation to Study Area**

The political and social gains that Richmond's African American residents had obtained over the past several decades were systematically reversed or limited through a gerrymandered ward system which concentrated black voting power to one out of six wards. From 1865 to 1896, 25 African Americans served as members of the Richmond City Council. It would take another 50 years for another African American person to be elected to a government seat in the City of Richmond (Taylor, 1994).

The Readjuster Party was established in the late 1870s with the goal of being an integrated political party that targeted the extreme control of wealthy white Virginians. It was an important group in fighting for African American Richmonders' rights (Tarter, 2022). For the five years they were in power, they were able to abolish the poll tax, lowered taxes for small businesses and

farms and raised taxes on corporations, and successfully collected thousands of dollars owed in back taxes to the state. In addition, they established the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute as the first public university in a southern state that would teach African Americans, now known as Virginia State University (Tarter, 2022).

In 1901, the Virginia General Assembly wrote a new State Constitution that reestablished a poll tax. Additionally, it established a comprehension requirement where voters were expected to understand and explain the new Constitution (Breitzer, 2021). This new requirement made it difficult for African Americans, and marginalized persons as a whole, to become registered voters. In 1900, the year before the new Constitution, there were 6,427 registered African American voters. Two years later, in 1902, that number had dropped to 760. This was only the beginning of efforts to suppress black political power (Taylor, 1995).

Over the next several decades, numerous political and social restrictions were put in place to further segregate and isolate African Americans. Central to restricting the growth and development of African American communities was the practice of redlining, in which maps were created to identify potential areas of growth for cities (see **Figure 4**). Every African American neighborhood in Richmond, and throughout the country, was designated as undesirable and indicated in red, while white neighborhoods were designated as desirable and shown in green. As a result, residents in red areas, designated undesirable, were barred from accessing financing for housing or businesses (Plumer & Popovich, 2020). Residents were unable to obtain mortgages and were restricted from the wealth building opportunities given to white residents. Through the 1930s, redlining worked to limit the growth and movement of African Americans and confined them to segregated and deteriorating areas. Jackson Ward encompasses two other communities -- Navy Hill, and Apostle Town. As a result of redlining, all three of these neighborhoods were overcrowded and underfunded, and continued to decline (Gillespy, 2020).

The Housing Act of 1937 authorized public housing programs and created the United States Housing authority to make loans to public housing agencies to assist in the development, acquisition, or administration of low-rent housing and slum clearance projects. As a result of the act, in 1940, the City established the Richmond Housing Authority, now the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) and in October of that year, the United States Housing Authority allotted \$1.97 million for two slum clearance projects in Richmond.

For its first project, Apostle Town, a section of Jackson Ward, which included some of Richmond's "worst slum conditions" was selected for clearance and the construction of new low-rent apartments (RRHA Annual Report, 1940-1941). The project would be named for Charles Sydney Gilpin, a Jackson Ward native and acclaimed actor of the 1920s. The decision was made in an attempt to improve living conditions in the neighborhood; however, in reality, it had detrimental effects to the quality and quantity of available housing. To build the Gilpin Court complex, two hundred homes, many of them owned by whites and occupied by African Americans, in Apostle Town were demolished to allow for the construction of 301 new apartment-style housing units. Potential residents of the Gilpin Court complex were restricted by both race and income. Begun in 1941, during World War II preference was given to black defense workers over neighborhood residents. Only 25 applications were received from families who previously occupied houses in the project area and 153 out of the original 301 units were occupied by higher income defense workers (RTD, May 29, 1943, June 7, 1947). In 1947, the housing authority returned the Gilpin Court complex to its original purpose and in a controversial move in the midst of a post-war housing shortage began evicting the higher income residents.

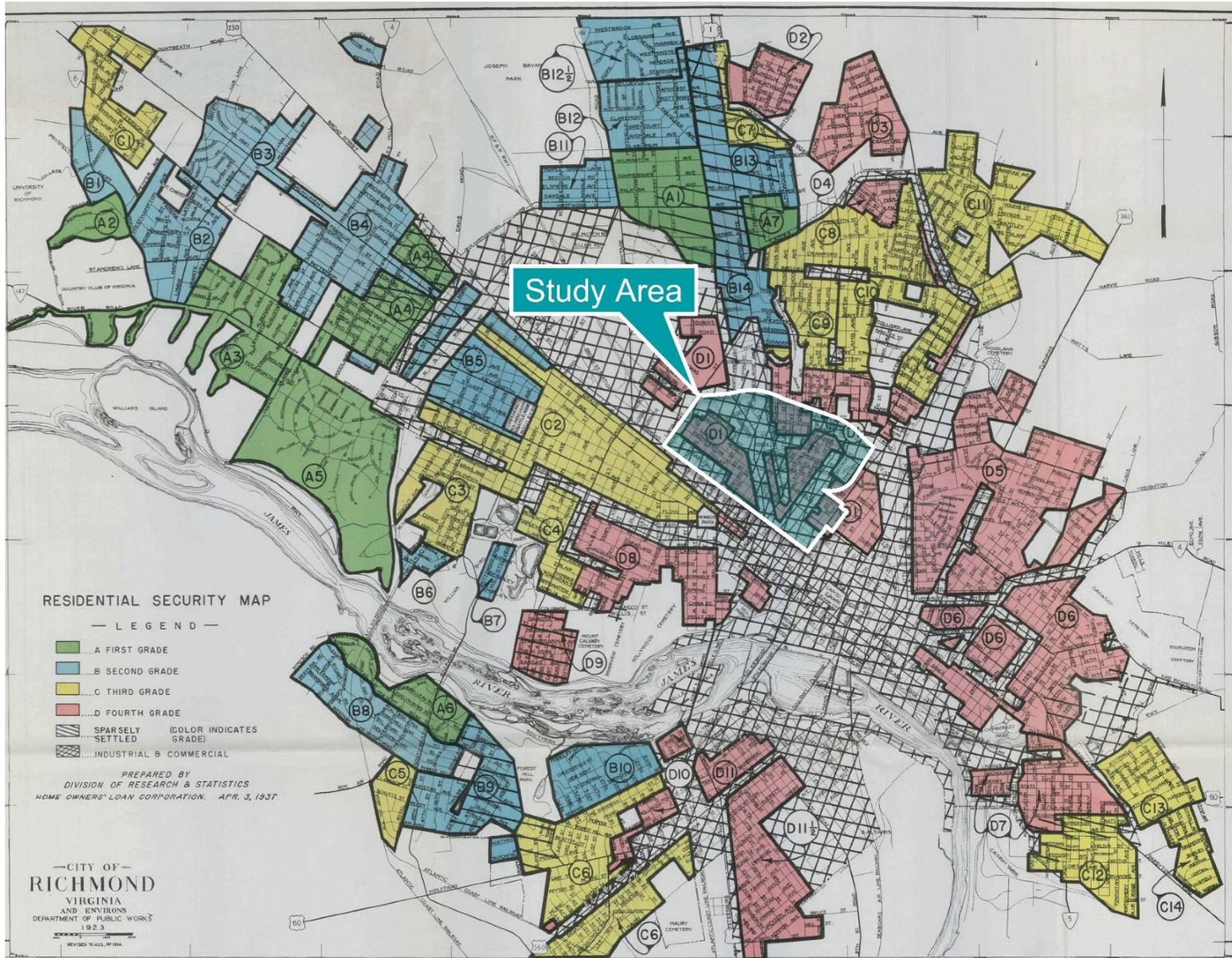


Figure 4. 1937 Richmond Development Designation Map

### 1.4.3 The Highway

In 1946, a consulting firm proposed a turnpike that residents of Richmond rejected twice. However, in 1954, the Virginia General Assembly chose to create the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike Authority which allowed them to build the highway the residents had attempted to reject. City officials decided that the best route through Downtown Richmond was through the middle of Jackson Ward. Across the city, 390 acres of both public and privately-owned land were taken for the construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike, now designated I 95/64. More than 1,000 homes and businesses were destroyed and 7,000 residents displaced. By the time it opened in 1958, 10 percent of Richmond's African American population had been displaced (Kolattz Jr., 2013).



*Aerial view of construction of the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike in Jackson Ward*

The physical separation of Jackson Ward was significant -- the community was split in half. For those on the south side of the interstate, there was still relatively easy access to the city and its business center. For those on the north side of the interstate; however, they were now separated physically and visually from the city and its resources. For both areas, disinvestment and continued demolition followed.

### 1.4.4 The Years After

In 1957 and 1970, a total of 482 units were added to the Gilpin Court complex. The changes that were made did little to upgrade the quality of the complex, instead they acted to create an even more out of place block of housing bereft of landscaping and natural features (Howard & Williamson, 2016).

In 1978, the historic significance of the Jackson Ward community was recognized as a National Historic Landmark, the highest official acknowledgement of the impact its history and culture had on the United States. This designation offers minimal protection but makes federal and state, historic rehabilitation tax credits available to the Jackson Ward neighborhood (HMDb, 2009). Portions of the Jackson Ward neighborhood south of Interstate 95 is also recognized as a City Old and Historic District which does offer a level of protection and preservation.

## 1.5 Concurrent Projects

There are many projects currently planned or underway in Jackson Ward and there is an opportunity to align the projects to find synergies. A number of these projects are highlighted in **Figure 5** and are summarized in the subsections that follow.

### 1.5.1 Jackson Ward Community Plan

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded RRHA and the City of Richmond a Choice Neighborhood grant to begin a community planning process for Jackson Ward. The Community Plan will look at strategies in order to create a shared vision for Jackson Ward's future and the transformation of the Gilpin Court complex. Additionally, the solutions identified in this Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study will help guide the process of trying to physically reconnect the two sides of Jackson Ward. Community engagement and

working groups began in early 2022 and will continue through 2023 until the plan is submitted to HUD. With this funding, RRHA has the potential to receive additional funding from HUD to implement the community plan following its completion. That additional funding would be instrumental in allowing RRHA to move forward with the redevelopment of the Jackson Ward area north of the interstate (Lazarus, 2021 and RRHA, 2022).

### 1.5.2 Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth

In December 2020, the City of Richmond adopted the *Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth* master plan, a framework for development from 2021 through 2037. The plan outlines one vision, 17 goals, 73 objectives, and more than 400 strategies as a framework for guiding equitable and sustainable growth of the city through 2037. The plan focuses on environmental justice, walkability, and economic growth and outlines six “Big Moves” to guide the implementation of the vision and expand equity and sustainability:

- Re-Write the Zoning Ordinance
- Re-Imagine Priority Growth Nodes
- Expand Housing Opportunities
- Provide Greenways and Parks for All
- Reconnect the City
- Realign City Facilities (CoR, 2020).

These Big Moves were the first to propose a freeway lid over the interstate to reconnect the Jackson Ward neighborhood to the north and south of the interstate, referring to this as Reconnect the City. As introduced in the Master Plan, “the main project of this Big Move is to cap the highway and build a park, buildings, and roads on top of the highway in an effort to heal the wound caused by the highway construction” (CoR, 2020).

### 1.5.3 JXN Project

The JXN Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to telling the stories of Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood. This project received a \$1.5-million-dollar grant from the Mellon Foundation through the Monuments Project, a \$250 million national effort to reimagine America's commemorative landscape. The funds will be used to support large construction projects, such as re-building and renovating the Skipwith-Roper Cottage. Abraham Skipwith was the first African American homeowner in Jackson Ward, taking residence in a parcel on Duval Street, on land that would be taken for the construction of I-95/64. The house would be moved around the Greater Richmond Area, before being moved to its current location in Goochland County. The site is planned to be open to the public in 2026 (JXN, 2022).

### 1.5.4 Richmond I-95 Bridges Rehabilitation

VDOT is leading the effort to rehabilitate and repair five bridges at 1<sup>st</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and Broad Street over I-95, in order to address structural deficiencies and improve vertical clearance over the interstate. Construction of the project is ongoing with an anticipated completion at the end of 2024 (VDOT, 2022a).

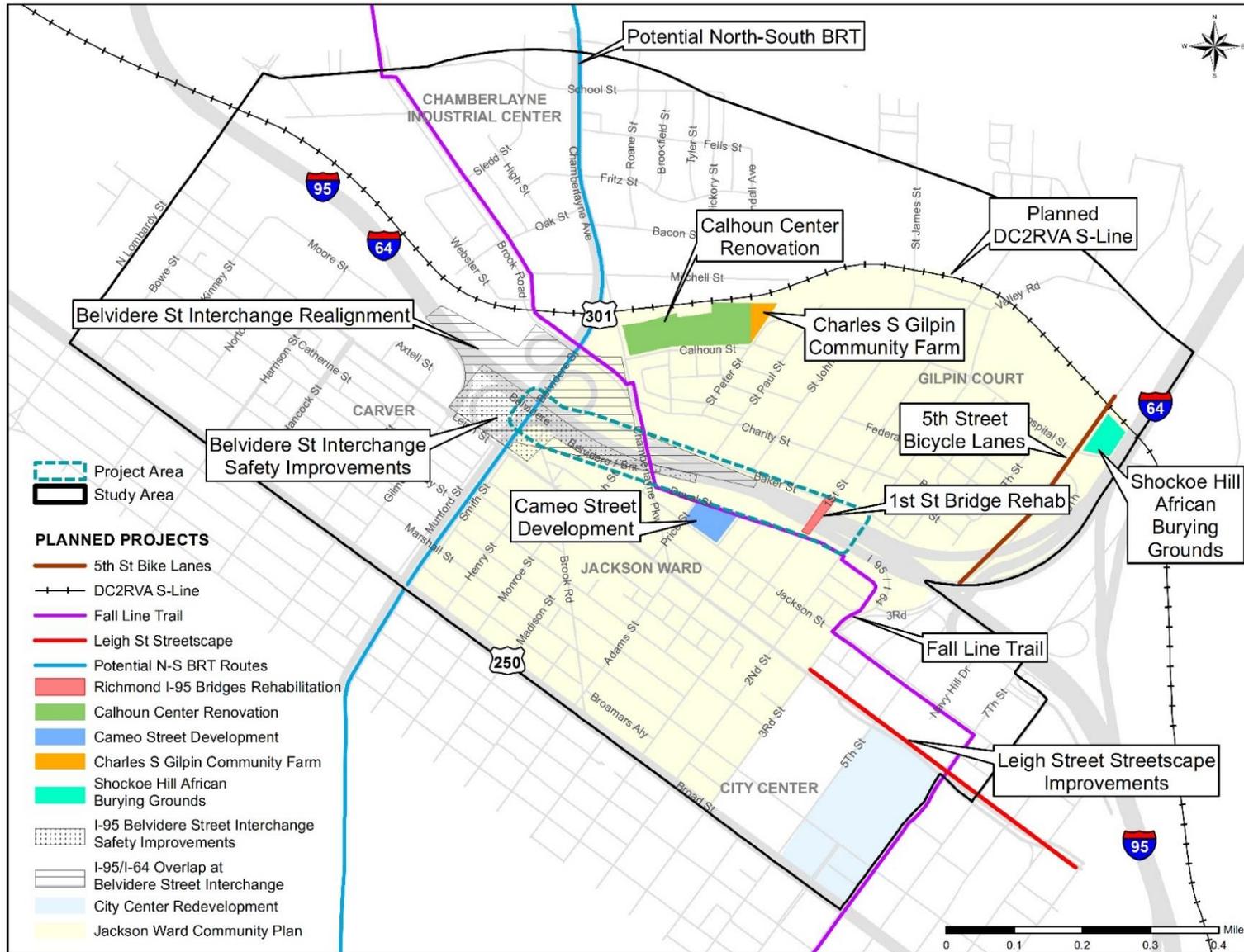


Figure 5. Concurrent Projects

### **1.5.5 Belvidere Street Interchange Realignment and Safety Improvements**

VDOT is also leading the effort to rebuild the Belvidere Street interchange to address existing safety and operational issues on I-95/64 and the arterial network. Improvements are currently programmed and in the design phase to improve traffic flow and safety by realigning the on ramp from Belvidere Street to I-95 south/I-64 east and removing an existing slip ramp from Brook Road. Also, crosswalk improvements near the start of the ramp (on Belvidere Street) will increase pedestrian safety and accessibility in the area. Construction of this project is anticipated to be completed in 2023 (VDOT, 2021c).

In addition to the safety improvements proposed, VDOT and the City of Richmond are conducting a Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) study, evaluating additional improvements and potential relocation and realignment of the Belvidere Street interchange with I-95/I-64 to enhance the safety, operations and flow of I-95/I-64 at Belvidere Street in Richmond.

### **1.5.6 Calhoun Center Renovation**

The Mayor and City Council are supporting the Calhoun Center Renovation and Calhoun Park Improvements through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which will be implemented by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF). The renovation will focus on reopening the long-closed aquatics facility and updating existing recreation and office spaces (Robinson, 2021).

### **1.5.7 Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground**

As part of the larger Lumpkin's Jail/Devil's Half Acre Site Development and Richmond Slave Trail Improvements, the City of Richmond is leading the \$500,000 effort to develop a plan on how to properly memorialize and protect the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground (CoR, 2022). It has been estimated that 21,000 people of African American descent were buried at the Shockoe Hill African Burying Ground which operated from 1816 to 1879. The burial ground has been disturbed by several infrastructure projects over the years. Threatened by new construction projects, and with the research and petitioning of descendants and volunteers, in 2021 the City purchased a former gas station that was located on the original burial ground and the state placed a Historical Marker at the site. (TCLF, 2022).

### **1.5.8 Public Art Charles S. Gilpin Community Farm**

The City of Richmond (Public Art Commission) is leading this \$30,500 project to create an art installation that improves the functionality and aesthetic impact of this community garden. The goal was to commission a piece that addresses a critical infrastructure need for a garden while also promoting the City's commitment to public art. Following a competitive application process, the selected artist, Barry O'Keefe, is designing a project that will include three key elements: a gateway, storage, and seating. Each of these elements will be hand-carved in wood and cast in iron, creating a visual link that connects the garden's various functional elements. The project's implementation includes extensive community engagement as well (WTVR, 2021).

### **1.5.9 Proposed City Old & Historic Districts Expansion and/or Design Overlay**

Two resolutions were approved on September 27, 2021 by the City of Richmond: Resolution No. 2021-R062 and Resolution 2021-R063 (CoR City Council, 2021a and 2021b). The former calls for a study to be done on Richmond's zoning maps to designate the Jackson Ward neighborhood as a design overlay district (Res. 2021-R062). The latter calls for a study to be conducted on the Richmond Zoning map to expand the Jackson Ward Old and Historic District. This project aims

to expand the designation in an effort to protect the history of Jackson Ward and its architecture. A preliminary analysis has found that this resolution would add 352 new parcels and 166 new structures to the City Old & Historic Districts list. Included in this designation would be Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church and areas along East and West Marshall Street that are not currently in the Jackson Ward Historic District National Register listing (CoR City Council, 2021a).

#### **1.5.10 Fall Line Trail**

In 2019, VDOT conducted a study to identify a location for a potential 43-mile multi-use trail that is planned to connect Ashland to Petersburg through the City of Richmond. The study report was published in 2020 and identified a preferred corridor for a multi-use path through seven separate localities with a total project cost estimated to be \$266.5 million; however, changes to the alignment as well as funding opportunities are anticipated to alter the cost estimate as sections of the trail advance. In October 2020, the preferred corridor was officially announced as the Fall Line Trail and VDOT has since been working with various localities and planning organizations to secure funding and advance sections of the Fall Line Trail. Sections of the trail will be constructed and maintained by either VDOT or the locality they reside in. As sections of the Fall Line Trail will be implemented through a variety of procurement and delivery methods, specific schedules for various sections of the trail will be developed. The trail is currently proposed to travel through Jackson Ward, along East Jackson Street and East Duval Street until crossing I-95/64 and continuing along Brook Road. This project has the potential to greatly increase active transportation access and networks in Jackson Ward specifically, and the Greater Richmond Area as a whole (FLT, 2022).

#### **1.5.11 DC2RVA S-Line**

In 2002, the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation (VDRPT) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) worked with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a rail corridor connecting Washington, D.C. to Charlotte, N.C. The corridor includes a number of different connections and plans, one of which is the DC2RVA corridor that would connect Washington D.C. to Richmond. The EIS for the specific DC2RVA corridor was approved in 2019, allowing for the design and development of the plan to occur. The project follows a 123-mile corridor and involves adding additional tracks to the current line, as well as updating existing infrastructure. The planned line follows along the eastern boundary of the project area, utilizing the existing CSX Railroad infrastructure. These updates and additions would be instrumental in increasing available access to the rail system, allowing more users, and increasing the functionality of the system to further expand capacity (DC2RVA, 2022).

#### **1.5.12 Potential N-S BRT Routes**

In 2018, the City of Richmond revised their bus network. All of the existing Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC) bus lines were upgraded, service was expanded in the Greater Richmond Area, and the Pulse was added as the first bus rapid transit (BRT) line in Richmond. Since the changes were implemented, ridership has significantly increased and development in areas along the Pulse line has occurred faster than in other areas of Richmond, showing the benefits of a reliable and efficient bus network. Currently, however, the bus line in Richmond only travels an East-West route, with the Pulse providing limited service to areas North and South. In 2021, the Greater Washington Partnership began a study to identify a potential North-South (N-S) corridor for a new bus rapid transit line. This study will help to identify the next steps for the development and implementation of a N-S bus line. While there is not a definitive plan in place,

the City has stated that they hope to have a strategy and project plan within the next few years (GWP, 2022).

### **1.5.13 City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan**

In 2021, the Richmond Department of Planning and Development Review prepared a plan for the redevelopment of the City Center. This plan was approved, and the master plan was amended to include the City Center Innovation District Small Area Plan. This plan involves turning the City Center into a place where the economy, social life, and culture all come together to create an innovative district that promotes growth and development. The City has drafted a change to the zoning ordinance to align with the Small Area Plan. The zoning change should be approved in Fall 2022. The City transferred the Coliseum property to its Economic Development Authority (EDA) to enable the property's disposition. The EDA is anticipated to release a solicitation by the end of 2022 to begin the process to select a developer to partner with the City to achieve the vision outlined in the Small Area Plan (CoR, 2021).

### **1.5.14 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bicycle Lanes**

The City of Richmond's Department of Public Works is planning to implement separated bicycle lanes in the near future, extending north and south of Hospital Street.

### **1.5.15 Leigh Street Streetscape Improvements**

Funding is currently allocated in VDOT's Six-Year Improvement program (FY2020 - 2025) for the City of Richmond to implement a planned streetscape redesign along Leigh Street from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Bridge. The project will update the existing roadway, which was constructed in the 1970s, to accommodate people who walk, bike, and use transit through access management (medians, lane balance, and consolidating entrances), shared use paths, sidewalks, and other streetscape amenities (Round 3 SMART SCALE Project Scorecard 3430).

### **1.5.16 Cameo Street Development**

The Better Housing Coalition, an organization dedicated to expanding quality affordable housing opportunities in Richmond, is in the process of developing a 67-unit multi-family apartment complex in Jackson Ward. The development is being financed under the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program and will have both rent and income restrictions to ensure that the complex serves residents with the greatest need. The development is located across from Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church and will include amenities, such as a playground or gardening area, that are designed to engage and connect the neighborhood (BHC, 2022).

### **1.5.17 Richmond Connects**

In April of 2022, the City of Richmond released the *Path to Equity: A Policy Guide for Richmond Connects*, the city's document for guiding future transportation planning. Utilizing the Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth Master Plan, the city developed a framework to address equity needs and the access to transportation for underserved populations. The Path to Equity: Policy Guide for Richmond Connects, will be advanced through the Richmond Connects planning process, which will produce a short-term Equitable Mobility & Accessibility Action Plan and a long-term Scenario Plan. The short-term plan will create a framework for the next five to ten years, while the long-term plan will address development through 2050. These plans, formed from a community driven engagement process, will create an equitable plan to future transportation development and ensure that all people in Richmond, especially those who are traditionally underserved, have access to safe and reliable transportation.

### 1.6 Case Studies of Freeway Lid/Cap Projects

Transportation departments around the country have been building connections over highways since they started building highways through neighborhoods and developed areas. These connections are often referred to as land bridges, caps, and lids that incorporate pedestrian bridges, roadway connections, bridge parks, and other uses. Many earlier projects were conceived to reconnect areas that were separated by the construction of multi-lane highways, or to provide new land in a city to allow for the creation of open space or recreation. Recent initiatives aim to provide the same reconnection; however, there is also a new focus on addressing the racial inequities that occurred when the highways were constructed through African American communities, with a goal of revitalizing the affected neighborhoods. In 2016, the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) launched the *Every Place Counts Design Challenge* (USDOT, 2016) to encourage communities to raise awareness about the barriers caused by existing infrastructure (USDOT, 2016). U.S. DOT’s current initiative is the *Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program* which is offering planning and capital construction grants to reconnect communities harmed by transportation infrastructure (USDOT, 2022).

**Figure 6** displays the locations of 32 known lid projects throughout the country that have been built and another 14 that are in the planning phase. **Table 1** lists the existing facilities and projects being planned at each location, followed by four case studies of similar projects.

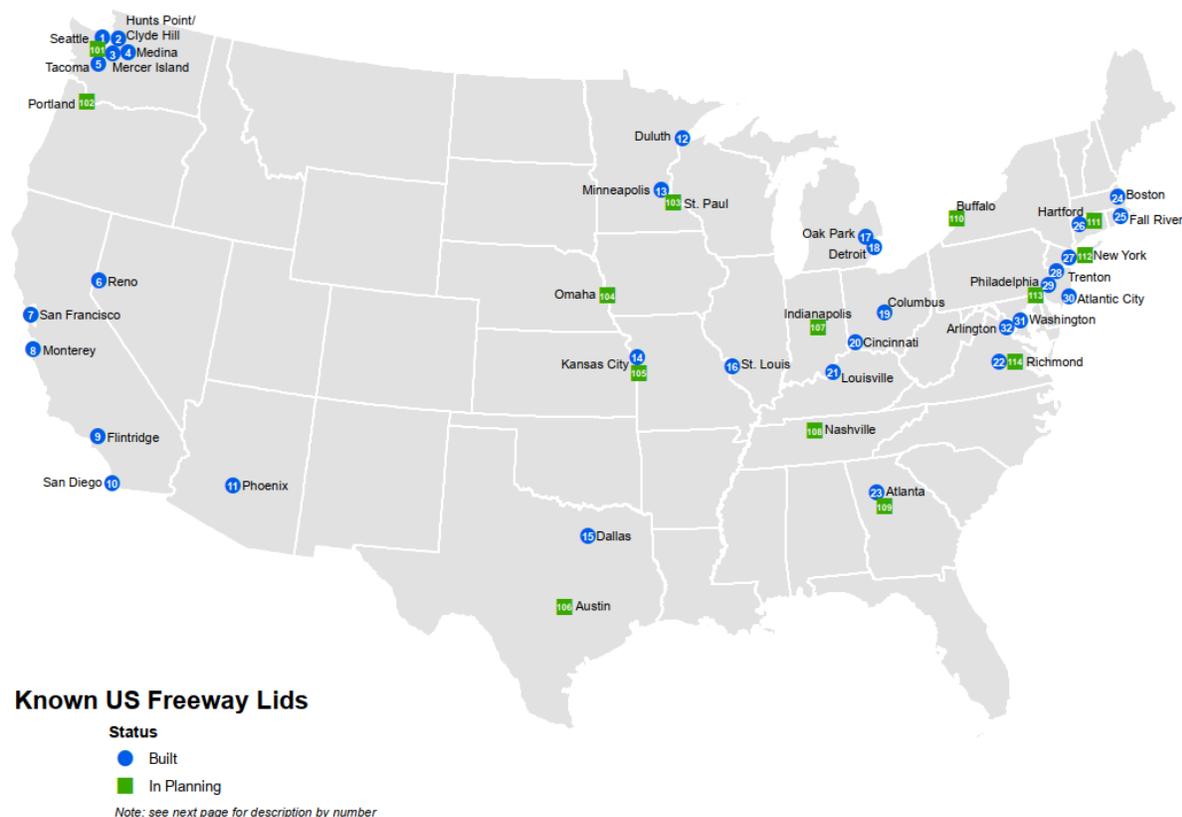


Figure 6. Known US Freeway Lids

Table 1. Known US Freeway Lids

Map ID	City, State	Facility/Planning Campaign
<b>Built Facilities</b>		
1	Seattle, WA	Freeway Park (I-5)
		Washington State Convention Center (I-5)
		Mount Baker Lid (I-90)
2	Hunts Point/Clyde Hill, WA	84 <sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Lid (SR 520)
		92 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE Lid (SR 520)
3	Medina, WA	Evergreen Point Road Lid (SR 520)
4	Mercer Island, WA	Aubrey Davis Park (I-90)
		Luther Burbank Lid (I-90)
5	Tacoma, WA	Fireman's Park (I-705)
6	Reno, NV	Walgreens (I-80)
7	San Francisco, CA	Presidio Tunnel Tops (Presidio Pkwy)
8	Monterey, CA	Lighthouse Avenue Tunnel
9	Flintridge, CA	La Canada Flintridge Memorial Park (I-210)
10	San Diego, CA	Teralta Park (I-15)
11	Phoenix, AZ	Hance Park (I-10)
12	Duluth, MN	West Tunnel (I-35)
		Jay Cooke Plaza/East Tunnel (I-35)
		Lake Place (I-35)
		Leif Erickson Tunnel/Rose Garden (I-35)
13	Minneapolis, MN	ABC Ramps Parking Garage (I-395)
		Target Plaza (I-395)
14	Kansas City, MO	Bartle Hall Convention Center (I-670)
15	Dallas, TX	Klyde Warren Park (TX 366)
16	St. Louis, MO	Park Over the Highway (I-44)
17	Oak Park, MI	Victoria Park (I-696)
		Rothstein Park (I-696)
		Freeway Park (I-696)
18	Detroit, MI	Morona Terrace Convention Center (US 151)
19	Columbus, OH	Cap at Union Station (I-670)
20	Cincinnati, OH	Lytle Park (I-71)
		Lytle Park Apartments (I-71)
21	Louisville, KY	Riverfront Plaza/Belvedere (I-64)
22	Richmond, VA	Kanawha Plaza (Route 195)
23	Atlanta, GA	5 <sup>th</sup> Street Bridge (I-75/85)
24	Boston, MA	Hancock Garage-Retail (I-90)
		Copley Place (I-90)
		City Square Park (US 1)
25	Fall River, MA	Fall River Government Center (I-195)
26	Hartford, CT	Mortenson Riverfront Plaza (I-91)

Map ID	City, State	Facility/Planning Campaign
27	New York, NY	George Washington Bridge Bus Station
		Bridge Apartments (I-95)
28	Trenton, NJ	South River Walk Park (US 29)
29	Philadelphia, PA	Chestnut Street (I-95N)
		Spruce & Dock Streets (I-95S)
30	Atlantic City, NJ	Horace Bryant Park
31	Washington, DC	Capitol Crossing (I-395)
32	Arlington, VA	Gateway Park (I-66)
<b>Campaigns In the Planning Phase</b>		
101	Seattle, WA	Lid I-5 (I-5)
102	Portland, OR	Albina Vision Trust (I-5)
103	St. Paul, MN	Reconnect Rondo (I-94)
104	Omaha, NE	Urban Core Strategic Plan (I-480)
105	Kansas City, MO	South Loop Link (I-670)
106	Austin, TX	Reconnect Austin (I-35)
107	Indianapolis, IN	Rethink 65/70 (I-65/70)
108	Nashville, TN	Jefferson Street Cap (I-40)
109	Atlanta, GA	The Stitch (I-75/85)
110	Buffalo, NY	Restore Our Community Coalition (Rt 33)
111	Hartford, CT	Hartford 400 (I-91)
112	New York, NY	Cap the Cross Bronx (I-95)
		Coalition for the BQE Transformation (I-278)
113	Philadelphia, PA	Cap 676 (I-676)
114	Richmond, VA	Reconnect Jackson Ward (I-95)

Sources: I-5 Lid Feasibility Study Summary Report, City of Seattle, September 2020 and Freeway Fighting Projects Across the United States, Freeway Fighters, accessed August 2022.

**1.6.1 Klyde Warren Park**  
*Dallas, Texas*

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Approximate Cost</b>	<b>\$110M (2012 CY)</b>
<b>Approximate Size</b>	<b>5 acres (220,000 SF)</b>

In 1983, highways built through the City of Dallas separated the city into Downtown and Uptown. J Erik Jonsson, the Dallas Mayor at the time, first had the idea of a freeway lid over the interstate from the time he decided to reroute them in the first place. It would take decades, but in 2002 the idea was brought back to the forefront and both feasibility and technical studies were conducted to identify the viability of the project. In 2006 the preliminary design for Klyde Warren Park was unveiled (Klyde Warren Park, 2022).

Klyde Warren Park was ambitious from the start, with designers and builders wanting the park to be a seamless transition allowing access to the park from any direction. The plans and design for Klyde Warren were specific and unique and focused on sustainability. Every aspect of the structure and the amenities on top were carefully designed and placed to ensure the most efficient and feasible bridge possible. Trenches created to be used as structural beams act like a control panel, placing fiber optic cables, water and gas lines, and telephone electrical lines all in one collective space. The plant and tree species help to manage water runoff, saving around 18 bathtubs of water a day, and carbon capture, with up to 7 tons being sequestered by the trees each year.

The amenities provided at Klyde Warren Park are impressive. The park space has many distinct areas and attractions, including a children’s park, dog park, botanical gardens, restaurant and café, and an expansive lawn, among others. At Klyde Warren Park, residents have access to more amenities in one space than most cities have as a whole. Studies have found that Klyde Warren Park has positively affected the Dallas economy by roughly \$2.5 billion, a number that will most likely continue to increase. The project was funded through bond funds from the City of Dallas, Texas DOT highway funds, stimulus funds, and individual donors. The City owns the park, but a non-profit foundation operates and manages the park. The City is making plans to complete the vision by adding another 1.7 acres to the park (Klyde Warren Park, 2022).



*Aerial View of Klyde Warren Park*



*Lawn at Klyde Warren Park*



*Walkway at Klyde Warren Park*

**1.6.2 The Cap at Union Station**  
*Columbus, Ohio*

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Approximate Cost</b>	<b>\$7.8M (2004 CY)</b>
<b>Approximate Size</b>	<b>1 acre (44,000 SF)</b>

In the mid-1960s, three separate highways were constructed through the City of Columbus: I-70, I-71, and I-670. Similar to other American cities, these highways were constructed through Black and minority neighborhoods, which resulted in the displacement of hundreds of families. The remaining residents were separated from Downtown Columbus, leading to even further discontinuity.

As an attempt to rectify the damage done by the highways, the Cap at Union Station was first proposed in 1996 over I-670 to reconnect Downtown Columbus with the Short North district. Discussions about the best course of action would continue over the next five years. Finally, in 1999, the City of Columbus reached an agreement with a developer in which the City would construct the bridges, while the developer would construct the retail buildings on top of the bridges. Construction began in 2002 (FHWA, 2020a).

The structure of the Cap at Union Station is unique. Instead of one contiguous bridge structure, there are three separate bridges that join to form the cap. The center bridge acts as a vehicular connection over I-670 and the outer bridges host both retail and restaurant spaces to create a vibrant commercial area. Compared to other lid projects across the country, the Cap focused on commercial reconnection, rather than trying to create greenspaces in an urban setting.

This decision proved well for the City of Columbus, as the Cap has provided a pedestrian friendly area for people to come safely shop and dine as they choose. Over the 20 years of its existence, the Cap has remained an impressive attempt at reconnecting what was once separated.



*Aerial View of the Cap at Union Station*



*The Cap at Union Station*



*Restaurant at the Cap at Union Station*

**1.6.3 Kanawha Plaza**

*Richmond, Virginia*

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>1980</b>
<b>Approximate Cost</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Approximate Size</b>	<b>3 acres (130,000 SF)</b>

As early as the 1950’s, government officials in Richmond were interested in the idea of a downtown expressway. Other major cities across the United States had constructed expressways to connect the city more easily with the outer suburban areas, and Richmond wanted to do the same. In 1976, the first segment of I-195 was opened, and additional segments were added over the following years.

For a city already separated by I-95 and I-64, an additional highway led to more displacement and disconnection. Even more disruption was caused by the fact that the expressway was significantly below grade, requiring appreciable excavation and removal. As a result of the hole left by Route 195, the City of Richmond, with the encouragement of the Federal Reserve Bank, decided to cap part of the area and create a park near the river and the financial district (Style Weekly, 2011).

Kanawha Plaza is approximately 3 acres in size and is located in the city center surrounded by skyscrapers and major businesses. The plaza provides an open lawn, a sunken pool and fountain, a concert stage, plants, and many trees for residents to relax in the shade. Additionally, Kanawha has provided an excellent venue and backdrop for performers to visit the City of Richmond.

In recent years, Kanawha has struggled with maintenance and upkeep. In 2016, the city completed a \$2.9 million improvement project to Kanawha Plaza, completing structural improvements to update sidewalks, paths, and lighting, and plant additional landscape to increase the natural beauty of Kanawha. A challenge the City still faces and is attempting to rectify is the pedestrian access to Kanawha. Because of the grade differences, there are a limited number of access points. While this challenge has not yet been solved, the City is actively looking for ways to maintain and improve the space.



*Aerial View of Kanawha Plaza*



*Kanawha Plaza Landscape*



*Kanawha Plaza Fountain*

### 1.6.4 Freeway Park

*Seattle, Washington*

<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>1976</b>
<b>Approximate Cost</b>	<b>\$9.5M (1976 CY)</b>
<b>Approximate Size</b>	<b>5 acres (220,000 SF)</b>

In 1965, I-5, the major highway traveling along the West Coast, was extended into Seattle, connecting it with other major American cities. Before the highway was constructed, urban planners and community members were already discussing how to seamlessly incorporate the highway into the City’s design.

Originally, a small fountain was placed next to the freeway, but soon after the Seattle government recognized the need for something larger. In 1968, the first park proposal was approved and awarded funding. The proposal was later expanded to cover a larger area, and in 1976, Freeway Park was constructed as the first park built over a highway (City of Seattle, 2022a).

Over the next two decades, significant improvements and expansions were made to Freeway Park to reconnect the City more adequately. In 1984, the Pigott Memorial Corridor was added to reconnect Downtown with First Hill, the location of the original disconnection. In 1988, the Washington State Convention Center was built adjacent to Freeway Park over another uncovered I-5 section further extending the size of the park. In addition, a number of new connections and improvements have been made to increase the accessibility of the park and ensure that everyone has access.

The design of the park itself is unique, combining natural spaces, with large concrete structures to create a natural urban area. The mixture of trees and plants contrast highly with the large concrete fountains and plazas, but the two are combined together in an interesting and distinctive way.

Today, updates are still being made to improve Freeway Park. Planning for improvements started in 2019, when the project received a \$10 million grant from Seattle Parks and Recreation to revitalize the park and return it to the forefront of Seattle recreational life (City of Seattle, 2022b).



*Aerial View of Freeway Park*



*Structures at Freeway Park*



*Seating Area at Freeway Park*

## 2 STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The process for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study placed an emphasis on public participation to provide the study team with input, ideas, and feedback on the future for Jackson Ward that reflect the needs and desires of the residents and surrounding community. A variety of outreach strategies and communication tactics were utilized to achieve one of the principal objectives of the study: to engage and inspire community stakeholders and target audience groups and educate, inform, and seek input for recommendations to reconnect Jackson Ward.

The community-driven study process included engagement with over 300 community members as summarized and described in the subsections that follow. In addition to the feedback and insight provided by the extensive community engagement and public involvement, the development of the feasibility study has also been guided by a technical working group, comprised of state agency and City of Richmond staff with interest or professional expertise in the development of the study. Additional meetings between the study team, members of the technical working group, and individual stakeholders occurred throughout the study process.



## 2.1 Steering Committee Meetings

To guide the community input and study process, a Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee was established to include residents, descendants of displaced residents, business and property owners, faith-based and community organization leadership, and prominent community leaders in the Jackson Ward community. The Steering Committee was comprised of 20 individuals whose primary roles were to:

- Serve as study ambassadors to share information and support the project through their respective networks and platforms;
- Review and refine the community engagement strategy, approach and schedule to ensure it aligns with project outcomes and community needs; and
- Assist in identifying and connecting with stakeholders, residents, descendants of displaced residents, faith-based and community organizations, relevant businesses, and property owners that should be informed, involved, engaged, and partnered with during the study process.



*Virtual Steering Committee Meeting*

The Steering Committee met six times virtually during the study process and provided input, critical feedback, guidance, and insight to help engage and inspire community members and prepare for community meeting events. Summaries of the steering committee meetings are included in **Appendix A**.

## 2.2 Community Meeting Events

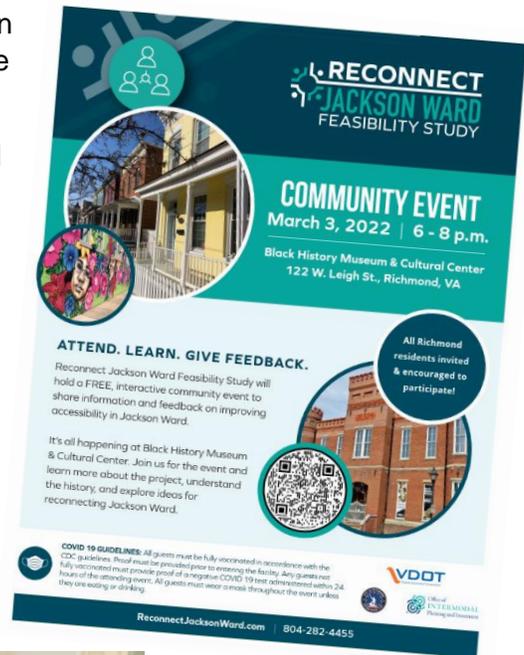
Residents, business owners, community leaders, descendants of displaced residents, as well as anyone in the Greater Richmond community with interest in the future of Jackson Ward, were provided the opportunity to attend three public information meetings that were conducted throughout the study process. The meetings were intended to raise awareness, educate, inform and engage the public in the study to gather public input, understand the community's vision for the future of Jackson Ward, report findings, and celebrate study milestones. A summary of each of the community events is included in **Appendix A**.

### 2.2.1 Community Event #1

The first public meeting to kick off the study was held on March 3, 2022, at the Black History Museum. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Introduce the community to the feasibility study and provide an overview of the process;
- Explore what “reconnect” means to the community; and
- Request input from the community on design features, points of interest, and locations for reconnecting Jackson Ward and surrounding neighborhoods.

The meeting was conducted in an open house format, and included a number of interactive stations and a team of technical experts available to engage in discussions with communities, individuals, or small groups.



**Location prioritization mapping exercise at Community Event #1**

A total of 94 community members attended the meeting. A total of 343 comments were received at the various interactive stations at the meeting and through a public survey that was also made available online and distributed throughout the community. Results of the survey indicate that residents believe implementation of the project would simplify movement around the

area, boost connectivity to destinations, and support economic growth. The survey also revealed that the majority of residents get around their neighborhood by car, foot, or bicycle. When asked where they would like to see future connections, respondents overwhelmingly indicated their preference of connections between St. Paul Street to St. John Street, St. John Street to St. James Street, and St. James Street to N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. Residents then chose parks and open space, playgrounds, and recreational facilities, walking pathways and bike lanes, historic markers, murals, and memorials as essential elements to be constructed as part of the connection.

Key topics of discussion surrounded the issues of gentrification and displacement, and the potential for this project to enable further gentrification and displacement without proper controls.

Additionally, discussions about reparations to address past harms were an important topic for attendees. Specifically, how the Reconnect Jackson Ward project can directly benefit African Americans was an important question for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project Team.

### 2.2.2 Community Event #2

The second public meeting of the study was held on April 28, 2022, at the Ebenezer Baptist Church. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Educate audiences on the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study: its purpose, process and desired outcomes;
- Share results of community feedback from the study’s “Community Visioning” phase;
- Engage the community on conceptual options to “reconnect” the north and south portions of Jackson Ward;
- Request initial feedback on potential amenities; and
- Identify interested participants for focus groups to advance the design process.

The meeting began with a presentation and then encouraged attendees to visit the interactive stations and to engage in discussions the study team and other community members.

A total of 39 community members attended the meeting and 16 total comments were received through the various interactive stations at the meeting and through an accompanying public survey that was made available online and distributed throughout the community.



*Participants responding to polling of potential amenities, including history, arts and culture at Community Event #2*

The survey was focused on identifying which developable lid areas would be feasible based on the potential funding opportunities. A range of varying levels of bridging or lidding were introduced, reflecting potential infrastructure solutions and project phasing. Respondents to the survey liked that the largest connection (see **Figure 7**), spanning between Chamberlyne Parkway and 1<sup>st</sup> Street, offered the most connectivity and coverage options. This option would give the most space back to the Jackson Ward community in terms of reconciling the cut that was made. Respondents were also pleased with the degree of green space and community space that the project could

provide. Overall, respondents were positive about this concept design; however, there were concerns about the possibility of allowing cars in this space.

In the second half of the survey, residents were asked to identify their top amenity choices for future development within the categories of 'History, Arts, and Culture', 'Play', 'Connect' 'Celebrate', and 'Socialize.' In order of priority, the top amenity choices were as follows: Open Lawn/Event Plaza, Permanent Rotating Art Installations, Historic Monuments/Interruptive Panels, Vendor Court, and Seating and Shade Areas. Of the top amenity choices selected, amenities that showed and represented history, arts, and culture were the highest priority choices of meeting attendees.

Continued discussions surrounding the issues of gentrification, displacement, and reparations occurred throughout and following the second community event. These topics were and are extremely important in consideration of further planning and project development.

### 2.2.3 Community Event #3

The final public meeting of the study was held on June 29, 2022, at the Hippodrome Theater. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Educate audiences about the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study: its purpose, process, and desired outcomes;
- Share a recommended framework to reconnect the north and south portions of Jackson Ward and seek community input that will influence a recommended design as the project advances;
- Communicate the next steps required for the recommended design framework for Reconnect Jackson Ward and associated final report;
- Review and discuss suggested policy and program recommendations for the Jackson Ward Community Plan. These are related to preserving and elevating Jackson Ward's culture and history, expanding small businesses, and preserving affordable housing.



*Community discussions at Event #3*



**LEGEND**

- Possible Park Area
- Possible Gateway Area
- Possible Buildings
- Community Landmarks
- Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
- Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
- Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
- Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
- Lid/Covered Highway Area

**REPRESENTATIVE SECTIONS**

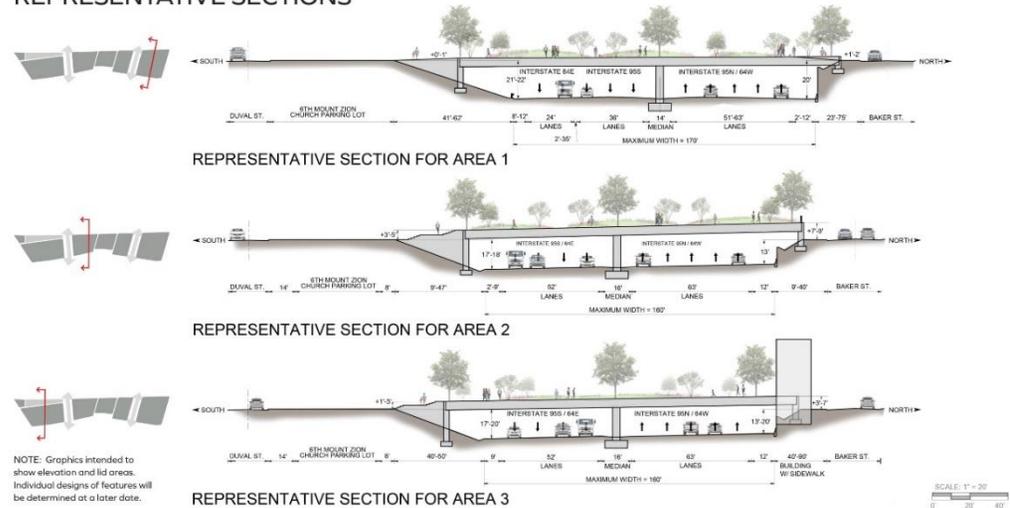
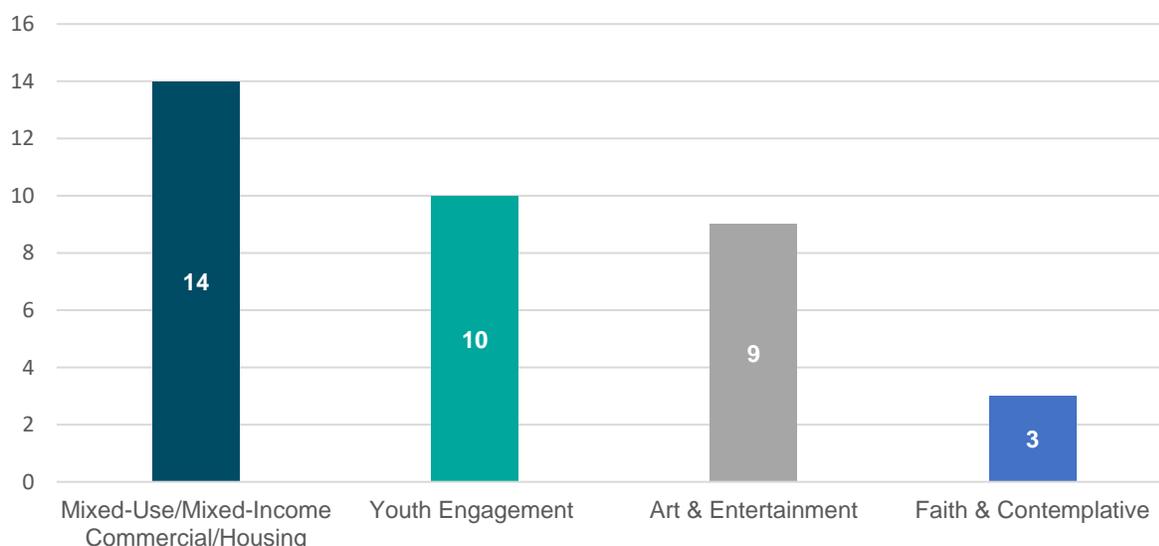


Figure 7. Large Connection Area Plan

The meeting was conducted in an open house format, with a number of interactive stations and a team of technical experts available to engage in discussions.

A total of 29 community members attended the meeting and 22 total comments were received through the various interactive stations at the meeting. At the Community Event, there was an opportunity for community members to ask questions and provide input to inform the feasibility study process. The Community Event was also accompanied by a survey that solicited public feedback on the design framework as well as the recommended themes to be incorporated into the future design. Four themes were identified as the priority themes for respondents: Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income – Commercial/Housing, Youth Engagement, Art & Event Space, and Faith & Contemplative Space. Respondents preferred amenity choices are counted and represented in **Figure 8**. The themes were selected to capture Jackson Ward’s community vision as it reflects on its past, present, and future to commemorate and revive the black experience in Jackson Ward and other displaced neighborhoods.



**Figure 8. Design Framework Priority Themes**

### 2.3 Pop-Up Events

All members of the Greater Richmond community with an interest in the future of Jackson Ward were given the opportunity to attend pop-up events hosted over the course of the study. Pop-up events were used to raise awareness of the study and provide opportunities for community members to get involved.

The first pop-up event took place on March 16, 2022, at the St. Luke Legacy Center, and the second occurred on March 23, 2022, at the Maggie Walker Memorial Plaza. A third pop-up event was hosted by one of the study's community ambassadors and took place on June 18, 2022 at Gilpin Court's Resident Informal Event. A total of 60 community members attended one of the three events. The purpose of the events was to:

- Increase community awareness of the study; and
- Distribute and encourage participation in the public surveys.



*Pop-up event participants at the St. Luke Legacy Center and Maggie Walker Memorial Plaza*

### 2.4 Focus Groups

Steering committee members, local church and business owners, local stakeholders, and residents with an interest in the future of Jackson Ward, were provided the opportunity to help shape the proposed design concepts and amenities for the study process. The focus groups sessions were intended to ensure that Jackson Ward's rich history, arts, and culture will be best supported in the designs for reconnecting and reknitting Jackson Ward with the surrounding neighborhoods.

The focus groups were held at the St. Luke Legacy Center on May 25 and 26, 2022. Each day, two sessions were held from 4:00-6:00 PM and 6:30-8:30 PM, allowing focus group participants to choose the time that worked best for their schedule. The purpose of the sessions was to:

- Collect input from residents and stakeholders to identify components of the reconnecting Jackson Ward effort that can demonstrate and promote a positive impact on the community;
- Engage these residents and stakeholders in discussions about what it means to reconnect Jackson Ward, to meet the ideals of inclusion, unification, and access to everyone while "keeping Black history alive";

- Develop ideas and preferences for how the history, arts, and culture of Jackson Ward can be celebrated through facilities, design, and programming within the project; and
- Create collaborative, participant-led design concepts of the project area, showing amenities and their locations in a design that is both practical and appropriate for the neighborhood.

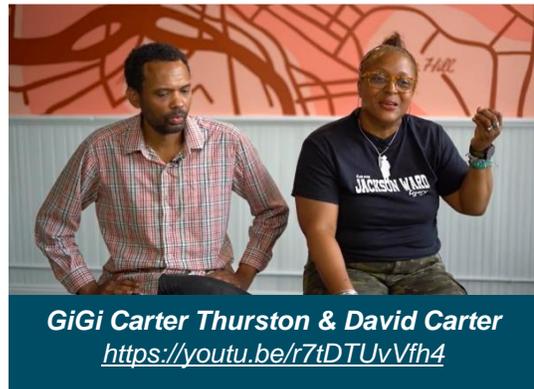


### **Focus Group community workshop**

A total of 16 community members attended the meetings. Participants worked in small groups to draw what they wanted to see in the project area using markers and other materials on maps, and then presented their ideas to the rest of the group. The project team then solicited opinions on which themes should be prioritized, how the space should be used, and what amenities, such as trees, landscaping, and benches, should be considered. Amenities were specific programmed areas, like a market plaza or space for outdoor movies, and features were general aspects or characterizations of the site, like landscaping or design for personal safety. Focus group design ideas are included in **Appendix A**.

## 2.5 One-on-One Interviews

Video interviews were collected to capture the history of Jackson Ward and vision for the future. Participants included two descendants of Giles Beecher Jackson, an attorney, entrepreneur, real estate developer, newspaper publisher, and civil rights activist, Gigi Carter Thurston and David Carter, both also current Jackson Ward residents, Nasir Ali Abdul Rahim, a former Jackson Ward resident who grew up in the Gilpin Court complex, and David Lambert, a Jackson Ward legacy-business owner on the north side of Jackson Ward. The video interviews document the history of the community and assembles opinions of how the community and assembles opinions of how the community could be reconnected.



## 2.6 Community Ambassadors

At the onset of the project, the project team selected a number of Community Ambassadors to serve as neighborhood liaisons of the project to engage the community and create awareness about the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. Over the course of the project, these Ambassadors interacted with residents and encouraged additional public participation from the Jackson Ward community.

## 2.7 Community Surveys

As previously summarized, each community event was paired with a subsequent community survey to further discuss the topics covered at the community meetings and request input from additional community members outside of the meetings. These surveys were utilized to seek additional feedback from community members and provide an opportunity for interested parties to submit feedback. These surveys were available both on hard copy and online, with SurveyMonkey being used as the host site for project surveys. Community Ambassadors distributed surveys throughout the community and surveys were announced on the City of Richmond's social media pages as well as through electronic mail.

## 2.8 Additional Communication and Outreach

Throughout the course of the project, a number of additional methods of communication and outreach were used. Updates and information about public meetings, project updates, or other relevant information was posted on the City of Richmond's social media accounts and the Reconnect Jackson Ward project website. Additionally, an email distribution list was established to send email blasts and information and updates to interested community members. Project information was also shared with the Jackson Ward and Gilpin Court communities through doorhangers and fact sheets. All outreach materials included a dedicated phone number and

email address providing the public with a means for inquiries and feedback directly to/from the Study Team.

## 2.9 Summary of Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Through the variety of outreach and engagement events conducted over the course of the Reconnect Jackson Ward feasibility study process, community members expressed a number of common themes that were carefully considered during the feasibility assessment and through the identification of potential next steps and future considerations. The following subjects received the greatest attention and will continue to be kept evaluated as the project develops:

- Concerns about potential gentrification and displacement, and the potential for this project to enable further gentrification and displacement if proper controls are not put in place.
- Concerns about reparations to address past harms and how to ensure that the Reconnect Jackson Ward project benefits African Americans
- The inclusion of history, arts, and culture amenities that reflect the African American experience
- The cost, construction, and completion schedule for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.
- Identifying potential funding for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.
- Support for mixed-use, mixed-income affordable housing opportunities, homeownership opportunities, and ongoing plans for redeveloping the Jackson Ward neighborhood north of I-95.

Overall, the community expressed one major common theme - the project to reconnect Jackson Ward must elevate and expand Black ownership, history, and culture in Jackson Ward. As this project continues to advance from the feasibility study phase, planners and engineers should work to address the concerns listed above through design, policy interventions, programming, and funding.

### 3 FEASIBILITY

Determining the feasibility of spanning an interstate and creating new opportunities for transportation connections, as well as the creation of community spaces and the potential for development, requires an understanding of the existing conditions within and surrounding the project location to inform an evaluation of the technical feasibility of implementing a new structural intervention. This section describes the existing urban context surrounding the project location and details the technical feasibility assessment that has been conducted for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. Based on the results of the technical feasibility assessment, a recommended design framework has been established, informed by stakeholder and community input, in addition to a rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost estimate to help define future design and funding requirements.

### 3.1 Existing Conditions

The study area for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study (see **Figure 1** in **Section 1.1**) was established based on approximate US Census tract limits for the purposes of data gathering and developing an understanding of the community profile; however, the study area also encompasses an approximate ½-mile buffer, representing the catchment area for any pedestrian trips within 10 minutes of the project location, assuming average walking speed of 4.0 ft/sec per MUTCD and *Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities*. In order to develop and assess the feasibility of potential structural bridge or lid concepts within the project location, an inventory of key existing conditions was developed for the master plan identified future land use and adjacent community facilities, historic sites and cultural resources, and other transportation and planning projects. This inventory is summarized in the subsections that follow.

#### 3.1.1 Land Use and Community Facilities

**Figure 9** shows planned future land use identified in the Richmond 300 master plan and existing community facilities that are within the study area. Land use was mapped by extrapolating zoning and planned land use information provided by the City of Richmond geographic information systems data, supplemented by a review of the City of Richmond’s parcel data. Similarly, community facilities were identified through a review of available data from the City of Richmond, aerial imagery, and a “windshield” review of the study area utilizing Google Street View.

The majority of the existing and planned land use within the study area is a mix of single- and multi-family houses interspersed with neighborhood businesses and community facilities; although, there are a greater number of businesses on the south side of the interstate than on the northeastern section of the study area. The northwestern section of the area, identified as the Chamberlayne Industrial Center, is primarily industrial with a smaller mix of businesses and residences. The areas further north and east have open space associated with the Shockoe Hill Cemetery and the Hebrew Cemetery as well as the forested area surrounding the freight rail line. North of the rail line the area is a mix of single- and multi-family houses, with businesses focused on Chamberlayne Road. As illustrated in **Figure 9**, there are a number of public amenities within the study area, including over 500 businesses, two public schools, one police station, one fire station, one medical facility, 11 religious facilities, four recreational facilities (Abner Clay Park, Calhoun Community Center and Park, Smith Potters Playground, and Nina Abady Festival Park), eight other community facilities (such as cultural centers, community gardens, cultural centers, and statues), seven public service facilities (such as public administration offices and an animal shelter), and three universities (Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Richmond Downtown, and Reynolds Community College).

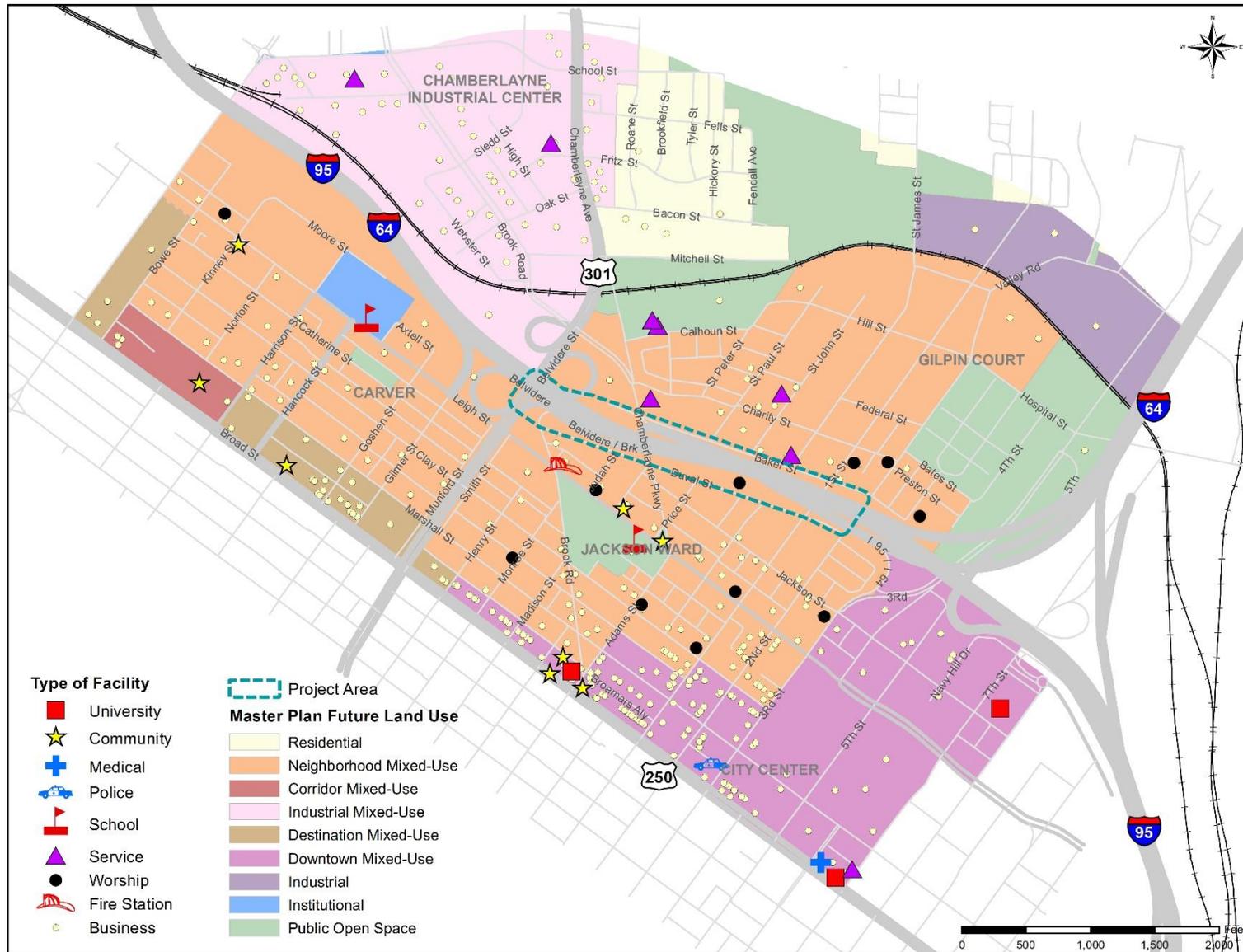


Figure 9. Land Use and Community Facilities

### 3.1.2 Historic Sites and Cultural Resources

As previously noted, Jackson Ward is a thriving neighborhood with a diverse cultural history. As a result, historic sites and cultural resources in the vicinity of the project location and surrounding study area vicinity were carefully considered throughout the technical feasibility assessment and identification of potential program elements and design themes that could be incorporated into the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

Known historic sites and cultural resources were identified through a review of publicly available data maintained by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the National Parks Service. Additionally, the City of Richmond maintains a database of historic sites and districts within the metropolitan area that was inventoried to identify any special resources of cultural or historic significance.

There are 21 historic sites and cultural resources that have been identified in the study area, as illustrated in **Figure 10**, and listed on **Table 2**. These sites are currently listed or have been evaluated for eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or have been designated by the City of Richmond for historic recognition and preservation.

**Table 2. Historic Sites in Study Area**

No.	Site Name	Designation*
1	Baker School	NRHP Historic Site
2	Barton Heights Cemeteries	NRHP Historic Site
3	Blues Armory	NRHP Historic Site
4	Broad Street Commercial Historic District	City Historic District, NRHP Historic District
5	Carver Industrial	NRHP Historic Site
6	Carver Residential	NRHP Historic Site
7	First Battalion Virginia Volunteers Armory	NRHP Historic Site
8	Grace Street Commercial	NRHP Historic Site
9	Hebrew Cemetery	NRHP Historic Site
10	Jackson Ward Historic District	City Historic District, NRHP Historic District
11	Maggie Lena Walker House**	City Historic Site, NRHP Historic Site
12	Maggie L Walker Governor's School	NRHP Historic Site
13	Richmond and Chesapeake Bay Railroad Car Barn	NRHP Historic Site
14	Shockoe Hill Cemetery	NRHP Historic Site
15	Sixth Mount Zion Church	City Historic Site, NRHP Historic Site
16	St Luke Building	NRHP Historic Site
17	Steamer Company Number 5	NRHP Historic Site
18	The Almshouse	NRHP Historic Site
19	The Fraternal Order of Eagles Building	NRHP Historic Site
20	Third Street Bethel AME Church	NRHP Historic Site
21	Town of Barton Heights	NRHP Historic Site

\*NRHP Historic Sites and Districts Denotes resources eligible, potentially eligible, or evaluated for potential eligibility on the National Register of Historic Places.

\*\*The Maggie Lena Walker House is a historic site under the stewardship of the National Park Service.

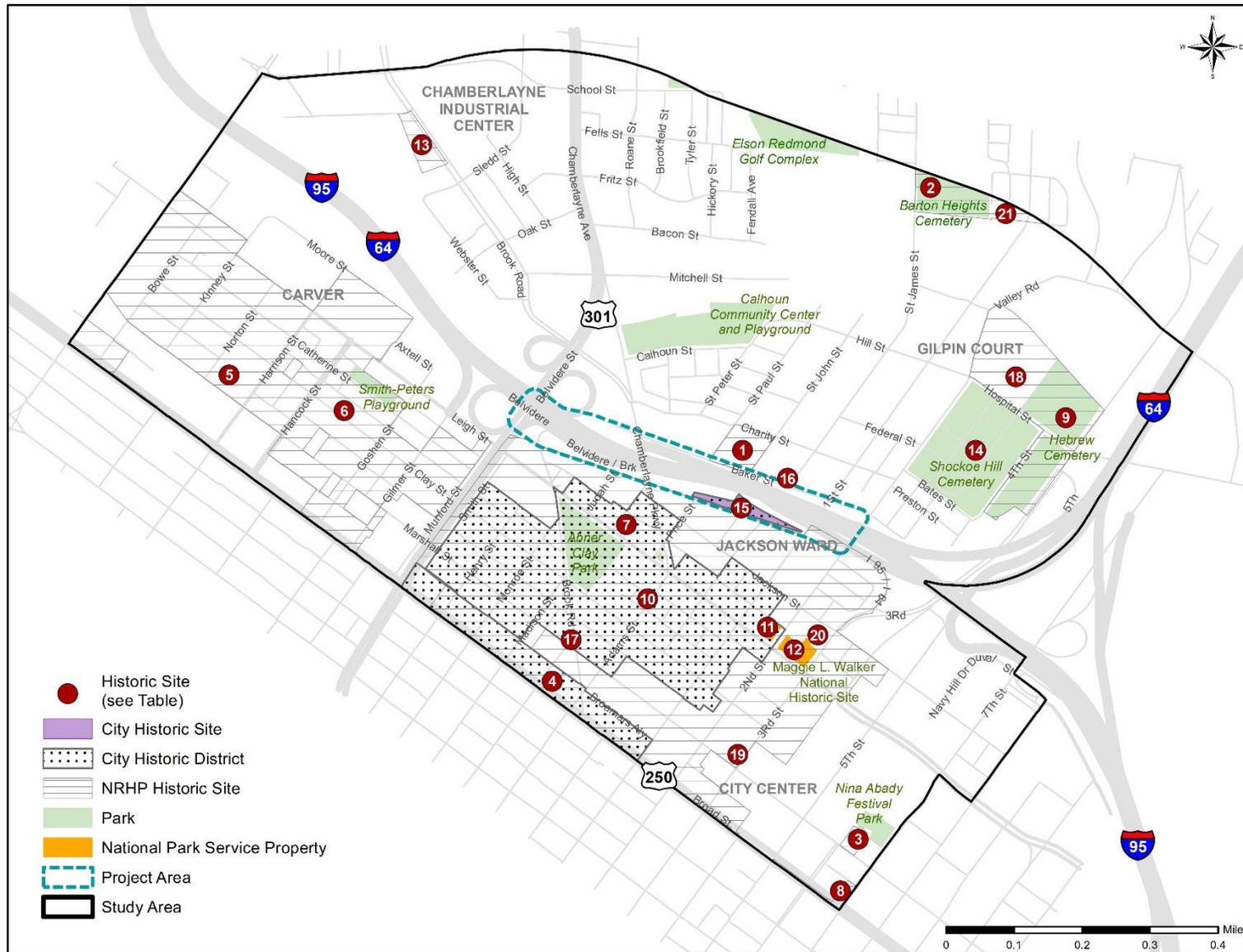


Figure 10. Historic Sites and Cultural Resources

### 3.1.3 Existing Transportation Infrastructure and Adjacent Projects

The feasibility study carefully considered existing available infrastructure in the context of potential new street connections and travel patterns. Additionally, to ensure that any future bridge or lid structure spanning the interstate could be synchronously implemented within the urban context of the project site, information was collected from the City of Richmond and VDOT regarding planned and proposed project within the study area.

As previously detailed in **Section 1.5**, there are numerous proposed improvements and ongoing planning efforts within the Jackson Ward community and surrounding study area vicinity. These previously described planned projects have been considered in the feasibility assessment and offer the potential for synergy as improvements are advanced towards implementation in Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to the planned and proposed infrastructure improvements within the study area, existing transportation facilities have also been taken into account as part of the feasibility assessment. **Figure 11** shows the inventory of existing transportation infrastructure within the study area and highlights areas with sidewalks (City of Richmond, 2022a). Several GRTC bus lines run through the area, servicing the 71 bus stops shown on the figure.

## 3.2 Technical Feasibility of Reconnect Jackson Ward

The primary intent of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study is to provide a preliminary investigation into viable options for a new connection across the highway, with consideration of the technical feasibility for incorporating a bridge or lid structure over I-95/64 within the project location as well as the potential Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost for such an infrastructure intervention. This engineering feasibility assessment has been prepared to answer the questions, “where can a reconnection occur?” and “what can it support?” This feasibility study is preliminary and based on engineering judgement and analysis suitable for identifying anticipated impacts and a range of potential costs associated with the implementation of the identified improvements. The study identifies where a potential new connection across the highway would be technically feasible, discusses ROM cost estimates, and recommends potential phasing and considerations for future next steps. However, based on the preliminary nature of this study, additional program definition, engineering design, and further evaluation would be necessary in order to advance any future improvements.

This section details the development and the fundamental engineering evaluation conducted as part of the feasibility analysis.

### 3.2.1 Engineering Constraints and Parameters

In order to identify a conceptual bridge or lid structure acceptable to FHWA, VDOT, and the City of Richmond for approval of construction over I-95/I-64, the approach to the technical feasibility study analysis was first to establish an understanding of general engineering constraints and design parameters that would be used to inform the feasibility study assessment.

Working in coordination with VDOT’s Structure and Bridge (S&B) Division, as well as the City of Richmond’s Department of Public Works, the Study Team identified the following overarching design parameters and structural design criteria:



Figure 11. Existing Transportation Infrastructure

- Maintain adequate vertical and horizontal clearance to accommodate existing interstate traffic flow and anticipated future improvements;
  - The proposed reconfiguration of the Belvidere Street merge ramp to I-95 south/I-64 east, consolidating the existing Belvidere Street ramp and slip ramp from Brook Road/W Duval Street, was assumed to be completed for the purposes of the analysis;
  - The planned operational and safety improvements evaluated as part of VDOT's Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) study for the I-95/I-64 interchange at Belvidere Street, including closure of the existing diverge ramp from I-95 north/I-64 west to Chamberlayne Parkway, was assumed to be completed for the purposes of the analysis.
- Minimize adverse impact to interstate traffic flow during construction;
- Minimize impacts to significant existing utilities (i.e., Dominion Energy high voltage distribution line 50 feet north of N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street bridge), adjacent roadways, and existing infrastructure;
- Consider the removal, modification, or replacement of existing bridges, ramps, walls, or other structures within the structural assessment boundary areas (see Section 3.2.2) for the purposes of the analysis;
- Avoid creating a tunnel structure, defined by VDOT S&B-IIM-97 Tunnel Safety Inspections, a supplement to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 23 Highway - Part 650 Subpart E, as one that requires, based on the owner's determination, special design considerations that may include lighting, ventilation, fire protection systems, and emergency egress capacity<sup>1</sup>; and
- Avoid adding buildings to the bridge or lid structures, since they could potentially create significant long term maintenance issues for VDOT, as well as significantly increase the cost.

Technical requirements, guidance, and references used to inform the design assumptions, and ensure the identified engineering parameters and constraints were taken into account as part of the feasibility assessment, include:

- Virginia Department of Transportation Road Design Manual (2022);
- Virginia Department of Transportation Structures & Bridges Manual (2022);
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Load and Resistance Factor Design (LRFD) (2017).
- Federal Highway Administration Guidance on Structures to the National Tunnel Inspection (2015); and
- National Fire Protection Association NFPA 502 Standard for Road Tunnels, Bridges, and Other Limited Access Highways (2020).

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<sup>1</sup> Per VDOT S&B-IIM-97 an engineering analysis will be required to evaluate the bridge length, presence of special safety structures (i.e., egress corridors), and the need for special electrical/mechanical systems (e.g., lighting systems, pump systems to keep water out, fire protection systems and ventilation) to determine if tunnel requirements would apply. Additional consideration as to whether or not AASHTO LRFD Road Tunnel Design and Construction Guide Specifications (2017) would be applied include if the carrying surface needs to be rated (i.e., does it have a floor with mechanical systems underneath or is it an on grade road).

### 3.2.2 Structural Assessment Boundary Areas

To evaluate the potential feasibility of spanning the interstate within a dense urban environment, a structural assessment boundary area was developed. The structural assessment boundary area extends from Belvidere Street (west) to just east of the N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street bridge at N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Assuming modifications and implementation of potential future infrastructure would be limited to the existing I-95/64 right-of-way, the area was primarily defined by existing parcel boundaries where structural abutments or tie-ins were assumed to be possible.

For the purposes of the feasibility assessment, the area was separated into six distinct areas (Areas A – F) as illustrated in **Figure 12**. These areas were developed based on existing parcel boundaries and the current street block network, but also with reference to previous connections that were once part of the historic street block network shown in **Figure 13**. **Table 3** includes a summary of the limits and approximate areal size of each structural assessment area.

**Table 3. Summary of Structural Assessment Boundary Areas**

Structural Assessment Area	Delimitation	SQF*	Acres*
Area A	N. Belvidere Street to Chamberlayne Parkway	220,983	5.1
Area B	Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	88,022	2.0
Area C	St Paul Street to St John Street	59,562	1.4
Area D	St John Street to St James Street	57,086	1.3
Area E	St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	74,151	1.7
Area F	N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street to N. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street	107,735	2.5

\*Includes approximate total area of Structural Assessment Boundary Area

### 3.2.3 Design Assumptions and Developable Lid Areas

Based on a review of existing and planned infrastructure within the structural assessment boundary areas and assumed topographic elevations obtained from Virginia Geographic Information Network geographic information systems and Google Earth datasets, the following geometric dominions and design assumptions were determined for identifying feasible locations for the implementation of bridge or lid structures spanning the interstate within the project location. **Table 4** summarizes the assumed structural design assumptions used for the development of conceptual bridge connections within the structural assessment area.

**Table 4. Structural Design Assumptions**

Design Assumption	Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D	Area E	Area F
Maximum Assumed Bridge Length (ft)	230	185	160	175	200	255
Maximum Assumed Span Length (ft)	125	95	85	95	105	95
Grade Difference (ft)	0-21	13-20	13-18	13-21	20-21	5-20
Minimum Required Vertical Clearance (ft)*	16					

*Note: Width of elevated park areas should extend approximately 200 – 225 feet along the interstate and incorporate openings within each area to avoid tunnel requirements. These design recommendations are included to eliminate tunnel requirements but should be reviewed and verified as the project advances.*

*\*Based on VDOT guidance and limiting vertical clearance requirements for adjacent bridge replacement projects over I-95/64*

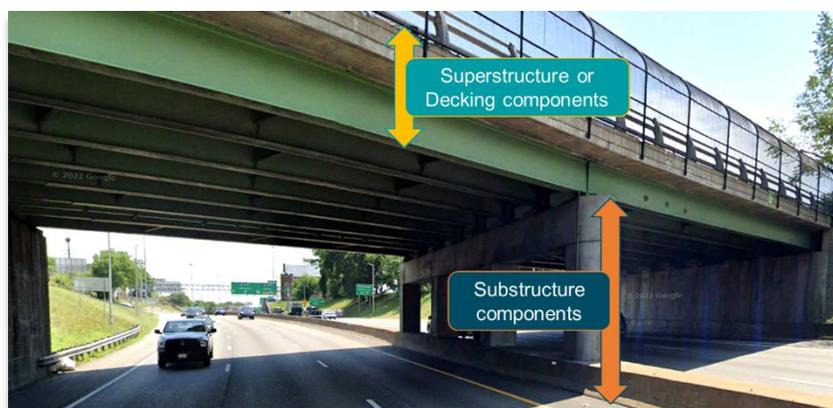


Figure 12. Structural Assessment Boundary Areas



Figure 13. Historic Street and Neighborhood Configuration

The identification of conceptual span configurations was also based on the anticipated framing and structural components that would be required for various desired load levels. The adjacent photograph provides an illustration of the basic components of a bridge structure.



**Basic components of a bridge structure at Chamberlayne Parkway over I-95/I-64**

Community members and the public offered ideas for uses to help guide the project team in identifying load levels<sup>2</sup>, with consideration of engineering constraints and parameters identified through coordination with VDOT and the City of Richmond. **Table 5** shows the assumed loadings for conceptual structural configurations evaluated as part of the feasibility study assessment and anticipated superstructure depths based on AASHTO minimum standards for continuous spans.

**Table 5: Load Levels and Superstructure Support Depths**

	Load Level 1	Load Level 2	Transition Areas*
<b>Description</b>	<b>Sidewalks and paths, bicycle lanes, or roadway facilities</b> (could accommodate historic markers; seating and benches)	<b>Parks and open space</b> (could accommodate historic markers, murals, or memorials; seating and benches; playgrounds and recreational facilities; arts, culture and entertainment space)	<b>Mixed-use/mixed-income development</b> (could accommodate opportunities for mixed-income and mixed-use development)
<b>Superstructure Depth (ft)</b>	3.25 – 4.5	5	N/A

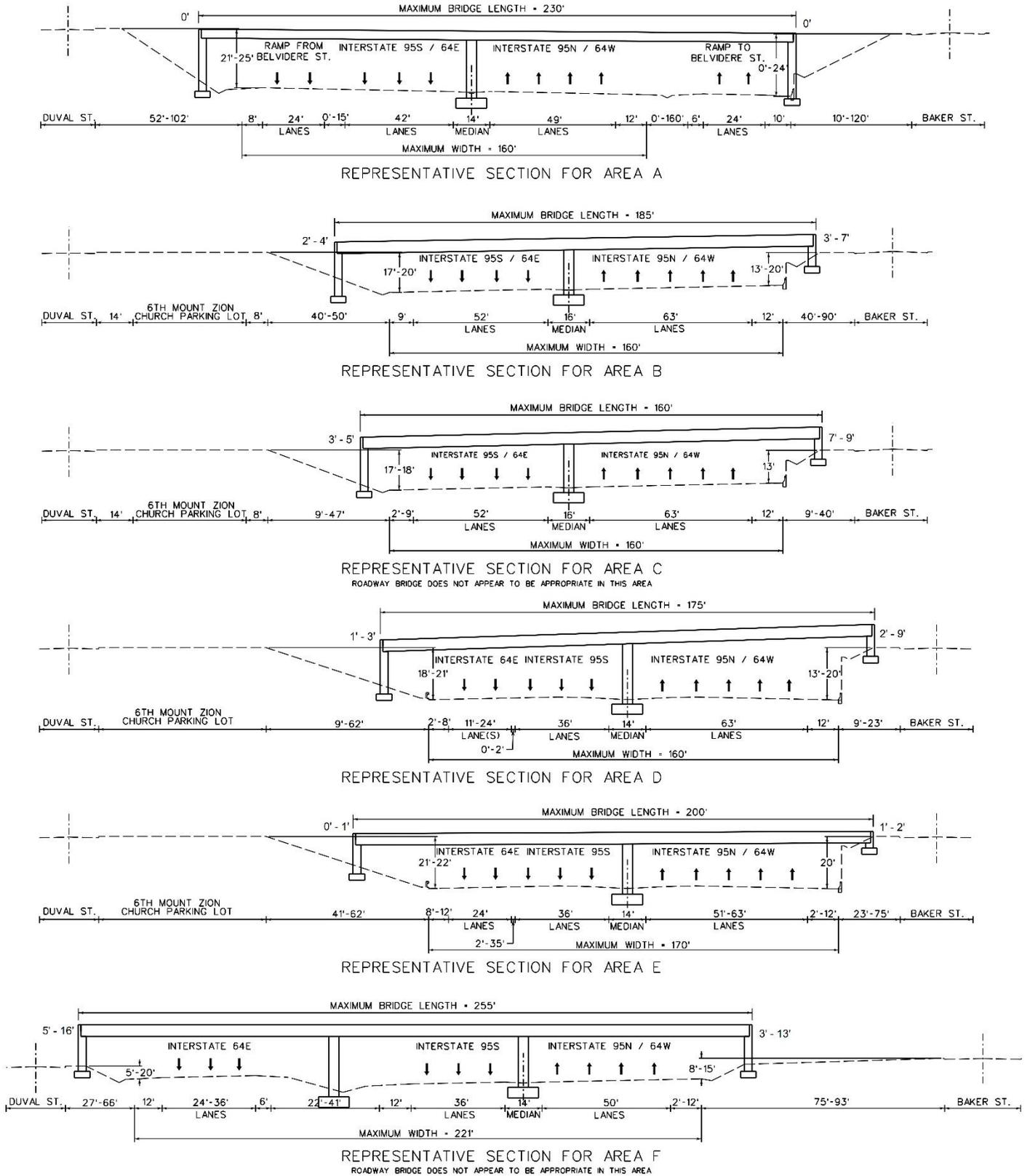
\* Buildings and mixed-use/mixed-income development loads limited to transition areas adjacent to conceptual bridge structures and caps based on identified engineering constraints and parameters (see **Section 3.2.1**).

Considering the existing conditions within each of the structural assessment boundary areas and taking into account the design assumptions noted above, potential structural areas were identified where it could be physically possible to develop and potentially implement a conceptual bridge or lid over the interstate facility. **Figure 14** illustrates the identified developable lid areas and **Figure 15** provides a representative cross-sectional view.

<sup>2</sup> See Section 2.2.1, which provides a summary of community input received emphasizing the importance of implementing sidewalks or paths, parks and open space, and historic markers, murals or memorials.



Figure 14. Developable Lid Areas



NOTE: DIMENSIONS ARE APPROXIMATE AND BASED ON AVAILABLE INFORMATION FROM VGIN, GIS, AND GOOGLE EARTH.

Figure 15. Representative Sections

### 3.2.4 Feasibility Assessment

The technical feasibility of the developable lid areas was evaluated to identify where it would be technically possible to construct a new bridge or lid structure over I-95/64 within the project location and achievable to build a set of lid structures within the assessment area capable of supporting the identified load levels of development. The resultant feasible developable lid areas are shown in **Figure 16** and a summary of the technical feasibility assessment for each area is noted in **Table 6**.

Considering opportunities and constraints within each of the structural assessment areas informed the screening of areas that would not be considered technically feasible in addition to the identification of requirements for future phases of technical evaluation and the project development process. The following considerations were identified as potential opportunities and constraints for integration of a bridge or lid structure within the urban context of the project location.

#### *Structural and Constructability Considerations*

The design assumptions described in **Section 3.2.3** were applied to each assessment area to identify where potential structures could be physically placed within the built urban context of the project location. Based on the assumed depth of the superstructure required to support the desired load levels, relative to the assumed available grade, it was determined that some locations would be infeasible for implementation. For example, in order to maintain adequate vertical clearance over the I-64 eastbound ramp east of N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street (Area F), it was determined to be technically infeasible to implement a new structure with the superstructure girder depth needed to support the anticipated loading.

#### Area A

**From:** N. Belvidere Street

**To:** Chamberlayne Pkwy

- ✗ Belvidere Interchange improvements
- ✗ Limited neighborhood connections
- ✗ No opportunity for park/open space

#### Area B

**From:** Chamberlayne Pkwy

**To:** St Paul Street

- ✓ Opportunity for park/open space
- ✓ Opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian connection
- ✓ Opportunity for potential development in transition areas
- ✓ Aligned with planned Fall Line Trail

#### Area C

**From:** St Paul Street

**To:** St John Street

- ✓ Opportunity for park/open space
- ✓ Opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian connection
- Limited opportunity for connection along Baker Street
- Adjacent to Sixth Mt. Zion Church

#### Area D

**From:** St John Street

**To:** St James Street

- ✓ Opportunity for park/open space
- Limited opportunity for connection along Baker Street
- Adjacent to Sixth Mt. Zion Church

#### Area E

**From:** St James Street

**To:** N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street

- ✓ Opportunity for park/open space
- ✓ Opportunity for bicycle, pedestrian, and roadway connection
- ✓ Minimal vertical distance of existing grade below new facility
- Adjacent to Sixth Mt. Zion Church

#### Area F

**From:** N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street

**To:** N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

- ✗ Poor connection opportunities
- ✗ Significant vertical distance of existing grade below new facility
- ✗ Potential adjacent property impacts beyond transition areas

**Table 6. Feasibility Assessment Summary**

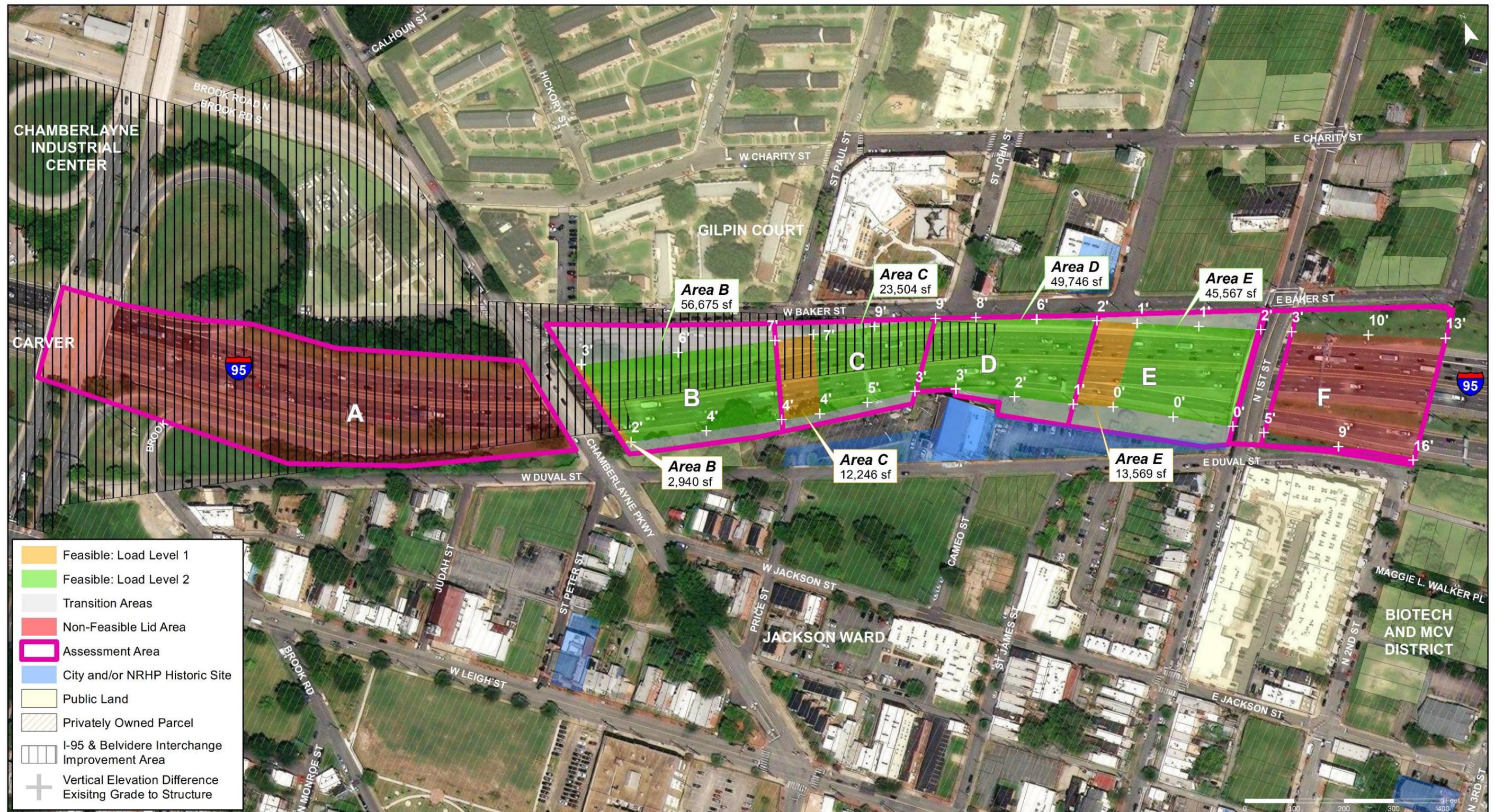


Figure 16. Feasible Developable Lid Areas

Additionally, the placement of piers or support walls were considered, relative to existing and planned infrastructure within the project site as well as assumed existing grades. Where existing conditions were anticipated to limit the ability to install these needed substructure support elements, the implementation of a new bridge or lid structure was determined to be infeasible. For example, a review of the planned Belvidere Interchange Improvements (Area A) revealed that the potential for locating piers or walls needed to support desired loading would be limited, thus resulting in a determination that it would be technically infeasible to implement a new structure in this location.

#### *Street Connections and Travel Patterns*

Opportunities to reestablish the historic street network were evaluated in addition to considerations of travel patterns for non-motorized transportation connections. Considering the existing ground elevations and assumed grades within each of the structural assessment area, a vehicular bridge connection at St. James Street (Area E) was the only feasible roadway connection, based on the maximum slope that would be allowed for transitioning from a new vehicular bridge structure to the existing local roadways on either side of the interstate facility.

Additionally, consideration was given to the feasibility of implementing new connections for active transportation modes (i.e., bicycle and pedestrian traffic). Where vertical clearance requirements would allow for a feasible bridge span over the interstate, the feasibility of incorporating non-vehicular modal connections, based on assumed structural loads, was considered. The locations for implementing structural elements for supporting bicycle and pedestrian loading and design requirements were based on a review of the existing and historic street network, with consideration given to bicycle and pedestrian trips. Based on a high-level review of available StreetLight Data, the highest number of bicycle and pedestrian trips south of I-95/64 originates closer to the downtown center of the City of Richmond (southeast of the study area). North of the interstate, these trips primarily originate between Chamberlayne Parkway and N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. These travel characteristics helped to inform the design as a representation of the potential movement in and around the project area.

#### *Environmental and Right of Way Constraints*

The analysis of the potential feasibility also considered how potential environmental constraints may impact the development of a structure and potential future actions required, should the project move forward once funded. The study primarily focused on identified historic and cultural resources within the project vicinity. Similarly, considerations of impacts to adjacent properties and right of way constraints were also taken into account. Opportunities to integrate any new bridge or lid structure within the right-of-way of the interstate would present challenges, particularly in the most constrained Areas C and D. This study identified where structures could be feasibly implemented within the right-of-way; however, further detailed engineering evaluations and coordination with adjacent property owners would need to be advanced in order to optimize the integration of the structural facility with adjacent parcels, minimizing impacts to historic resources and private properties.

Additionally, I-95/64 is a federal facility under the oversight of FHWA and maintained by VDOT. As the Reconnect Jackson Ward project would involve a federal facility and would be expected to be funded, in part, through federal transportation dollars, compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) would be required. NEPA requires that any federal action (i.e., funding, permitting, or policy decisions) consider the potential environmental impacts of that action. Therefore, prior to FHWA or VDOT approving the use of federal funds for project

implementation and impacts to the interstate system, an environmental review of the project would be required to ensure compliance with NEPA, in addition to other applicable environmental laws and regulations such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. As part of the environmental review and concurrent with further project engineering and design, opportunities to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts to adjacent historic and cultural resources, such as Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church, would be evaluated in detail.

### 3.3 Recommended Design Framework

As a result of the Feasibility Assessment, four lid areas, Areas B, C, D, and E, were considered to be technically feasible and were advanced into potential design areas. Concepts and refined typical sections were developed for each area to solicit input from the public on possible program and thematic elements to incorporate into a future project design as well as to inform the identification on possible phasing and project implementation strategies. **Figure 17** shows the conceptual land use areas, grade constraints, potential connections, and representative sections that were conveyed to the community.

Considering the substantial investment that would be anticipated to implement a new connection, the feasibility study assessment included an evaluation of the developable areas to identify potential opportunities to phase the implementation of a future project as a large, medium, or small connection. The most efficient delivery of the project would be to construct the large connection concurrently, as illustrated on **Figure 17**; however, opportunities for project phasing were explored that would allow for the design and implementation of more modest connections that still provide more opportunities to reconnect to the history of people and place, support economic vitality and growth, and increase connectivity to community facilities. The identification of potential phasing considered prioritization of multimodal bridge connections, where feasible (i.e. St. James Street at Area E), subsequently followed by more robust lid interventions. **Figures 18 and 19** present the medium or small connection concepts as they were presented to the community and additional discussion of potential phasing considerations is proved in **Section 1.4**.

Based on the input received through the public, a recommended design framework was developed to inform considerations for future engineering and design, as the project advances should funding be identified for future development and implementation. The framework plan gives an outline of how the primary desired design themes, identified through the community engagement process, can be integrated with the neighborhood's history, existing use areas and needs, and future growth patterns. The current concept design would reconnect the historic street grid, establishing new vehicular, bicycle, and/or pedestrian travel routes at St. Paul, St. John, and St. James Streets. Gateways at these new access points would welcome the community and visitors to the site, while a new flowing circulation route would weave between the gateways, stitching the areas together. The future design of the developable areas is intended to tell the story of Jackson Ward as visitors travel the length of the project.

The reestablished historic street grid creates four “blocks” within the project area. Each block focuses on one of the primary themes, while infusing features from the other three blocks. Each block's primary theme is related to the context of the surrounding neighborhood, considering primary roads, commercial and residential land uses, historical and civic neighboring buildings, and redevelopment planning projects, as well as the physical features of the site like elevation changes, space between the project and the road, and bridge construction requirements.

**Design Area Plan Concept – Large Connection**



**LEGEND**

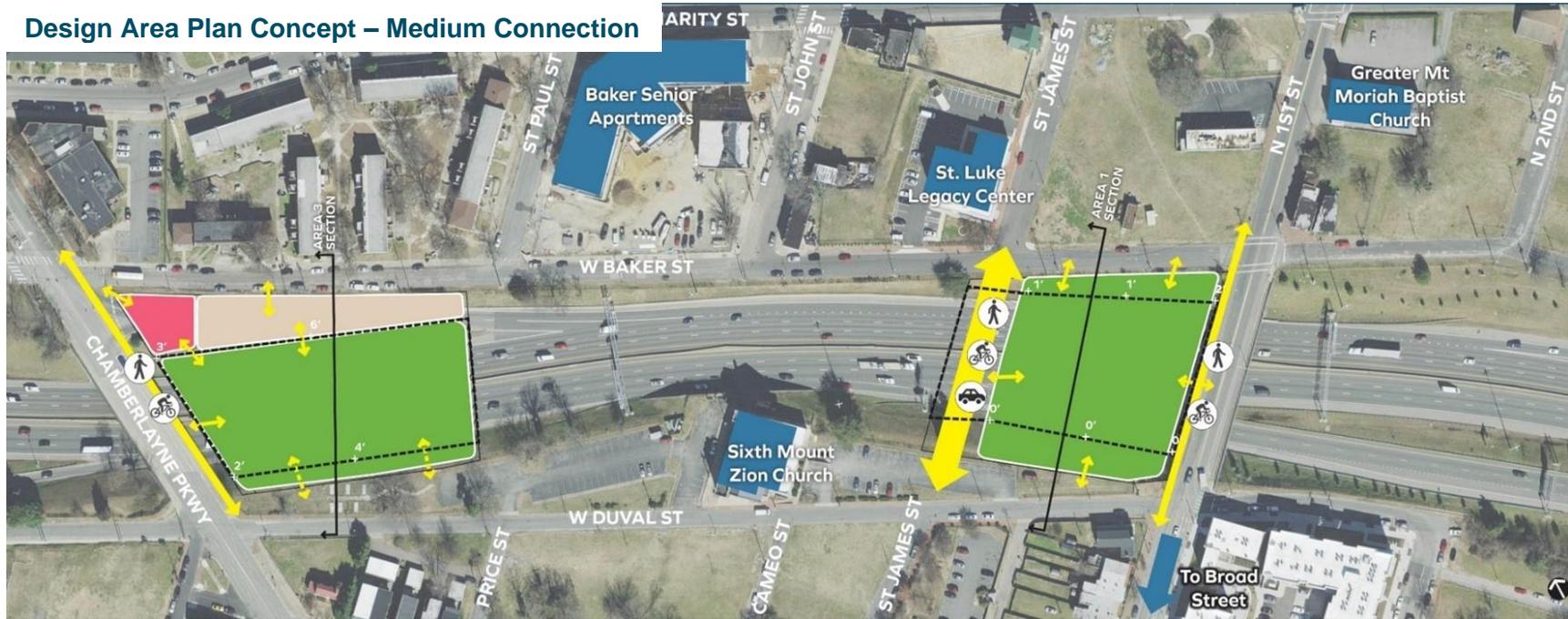
- Possible Park Area
- Possible Gateway Area
- Possible Buildings
- Community Landmarks
- Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/ or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
- Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
- Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
- Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
- Lid/Covered Highway Area

**Large Connection Features:**

- Two new vehicular connections: one to connect the two sides of St. James Street and one to connect St. Paul Street to St. Price Street. Features include:
  - Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
  - 10' Shared-Use Path
  - 5' Sidewalks
- Three new park/event spaces: between St. James Street and N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, between St. Paul Street and Chamberlayne Pkwy, and between St. Paul Street and St. James Street. Features include:
  - Amenities
  - Building/commerce space
  - Event space
- Two new pedestrian connections: one along N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and one along Chamberlayne Pkwy. Features include:
  - 10' Shared-Use Path
  - 5' Sidewalks

*Figure 17. Design Area Plan Concept – Large Connection*

**Design Area Plan Concept – Medium Connection**



**Medium Connection Features:**

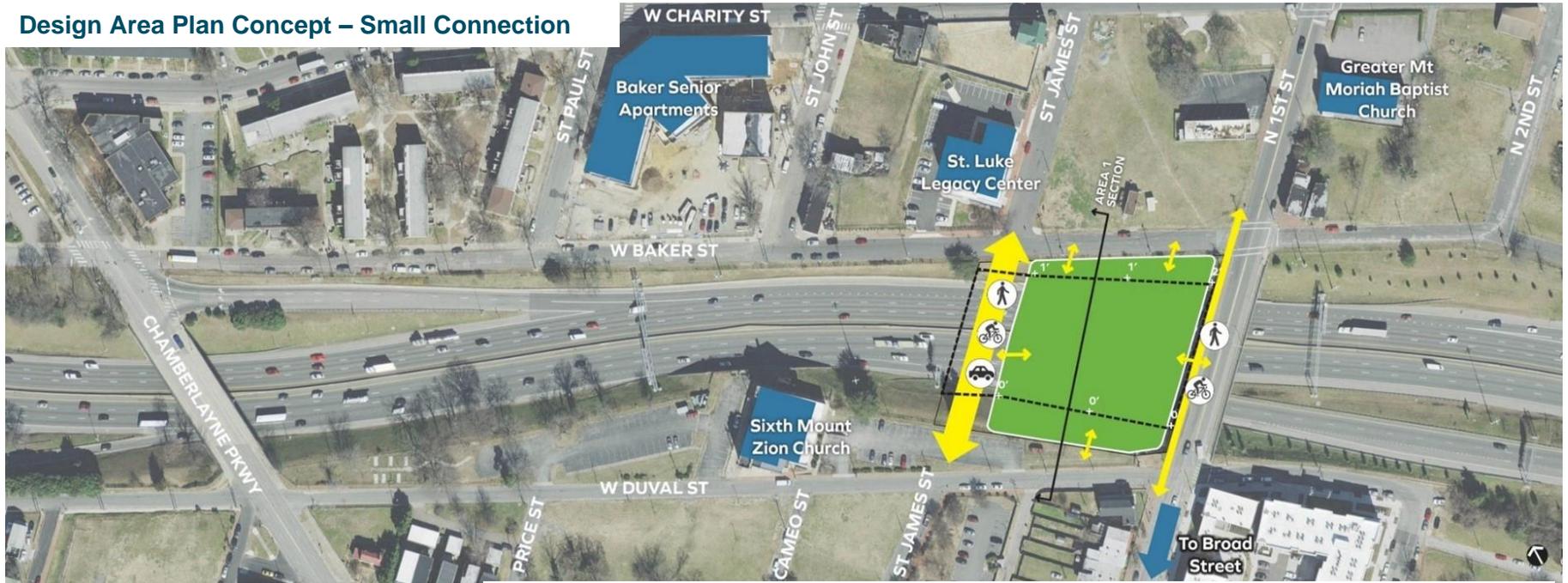
**LEGEND**

- Possible Park Area
- Possible Gateway Area
- Possible Buildings
- Community Landmarks
- Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/ or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
- Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
- Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
- Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
- Lid/Covered Highway Area

- Multimodal connection to connect the two sides St. James Street. Features include:
  - Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
  - 10' Shared-Use Path
  - 5' Sidewalks
- Two new Park/Event spaces: one between St. James Street and N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and one between St. Paul Street and Chamberlayne Pkwy. Features include:
  - Amenities
  - Building/commerce space
  - Event space
- Two new pedestrian connections: one along N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and one along Chamberlayne Pkwy. Features include:
  - 10' Shared-Use Path
  - 5' Sidewalks

*Figure 18. Design Area Plan Concept – Medium Connection*

**Design Area Plan Concept – Small Connection**



**LEGEND**

- Possible Park Area
- Possible Gateway Area
- Possible Buildings
- Community Landmarks
- ↔
 Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/ or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
- ↔
 Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
- ↔
 Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
- Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
- Lid/Covered Highway Area

**Small Connection Features:**

- Vehicular connection to connect the two sides St. James Street. Features include:
  - Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
  - 10' Shared-Use Path
  - 5' Sidewalks
- Park or event space between W Duval Street and W Baker Street. Features include:
  - Amenities
  - Building/commerce space
  - Event space

Figure 19. Design Area Plan Concept – Small Connection

The themes associated with more activity, crowds, and events, Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income Commercial & Housing and Art & Entertainment Space, are located on the project ends where they have high visibility and are more easily accessible to the wider Richmond area. The western project area between Chamberlayne Parkway and St. Paul Street is focused on Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income Commercial & Housing. The physical characteristics of this section allow the most significant building construction within the project area and the planned redevelopment of the area north of the interstate could be coordinated to create a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood center. The Art & Entertainment themed area is located on the east end of the project, between St. James Street and N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street. This area is adjacent to the historic arts and music district of Jackson Ward, with the Hippodrome Theater and annual 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Festival. Events in this area of the lid could easily expand from programming in the surrounding area.

The themes associated with quieter activities and more family and community related needs, Youth Engagement and Faith & Contemplative Space, are located in the center of project area, between St. Paul Street and St. James Street. This area adjoins residential areas, senior centers, churches, community centers, and historic structures, and features that support these needs are most appropriate.

As noted above, each block is focused on one priority theme, but the priority themes are represented in every block, weaving features that engage play, learning, community building, quiet contemplation, personal growth, and economic development into every section of the project.

The Framework Plan, illustrated on **Figure 20**, shows how the priority themes identified by the community can be unified with the history, context, and properties adjacent to the site to create a project that supports a safe, connected, and vibrant community.

### 3.3.1 Exploded Axon and Conceptual Visualization

The Framework Plan was then used to highlight each layer of elements associated with the plan. An exploded axonometric drawing, or an “exploded axon”, takes a base plan, in this case the Reconnect Jackson Ward Framework Plan, and highlights certain elements of the plan by hovering them above the base plan. Different elements can be highlighted and stacked in hovering layers to draw attention to how the whole plan works together. This is a way to show what the themes are in the base plan and also how they all relate to the original base plan. In the Framework Plan Exploded Axon, it can be seen that the same parts of the site are highlighted on several different layers. This shows the intention that the same location will be used for many different activities, creating a diverse, multi-use, and engaging public area. For example, the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Duval Street is highlighted on the Gateway and Circulation, Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income Commercial & Housing, and History, Arts, & Culture layers. This is because this corner is a major entry point for the site, a plaza that could be used for market events, a stage, and event space. There are many areas of the project that are proposed as similar multi-faceted spaces.

An axonometric diagram, illustrating the compilation of design elements considered in the development of the recommended design framework plan, is shown on **Figure 21**. Additionally, a conceptual visualization of the recommended design framework plan is included in **Figure 22**. Considering the preliminary nature of this feasibility study and additional design and engineering that will be required to advance the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, it should be emphasized that the framework plan and conceptual renderings are illustrative and subject to change.



### Primary Framework Themes

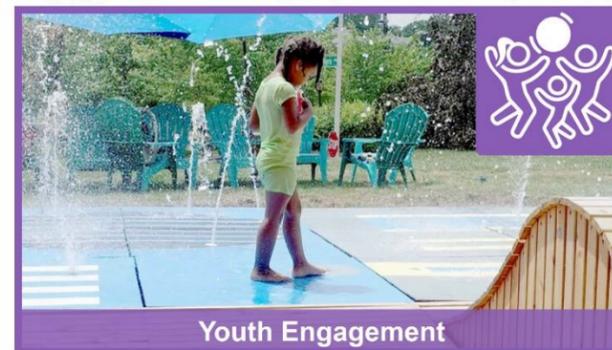


Figure 20. Recommended Design Framework Plan

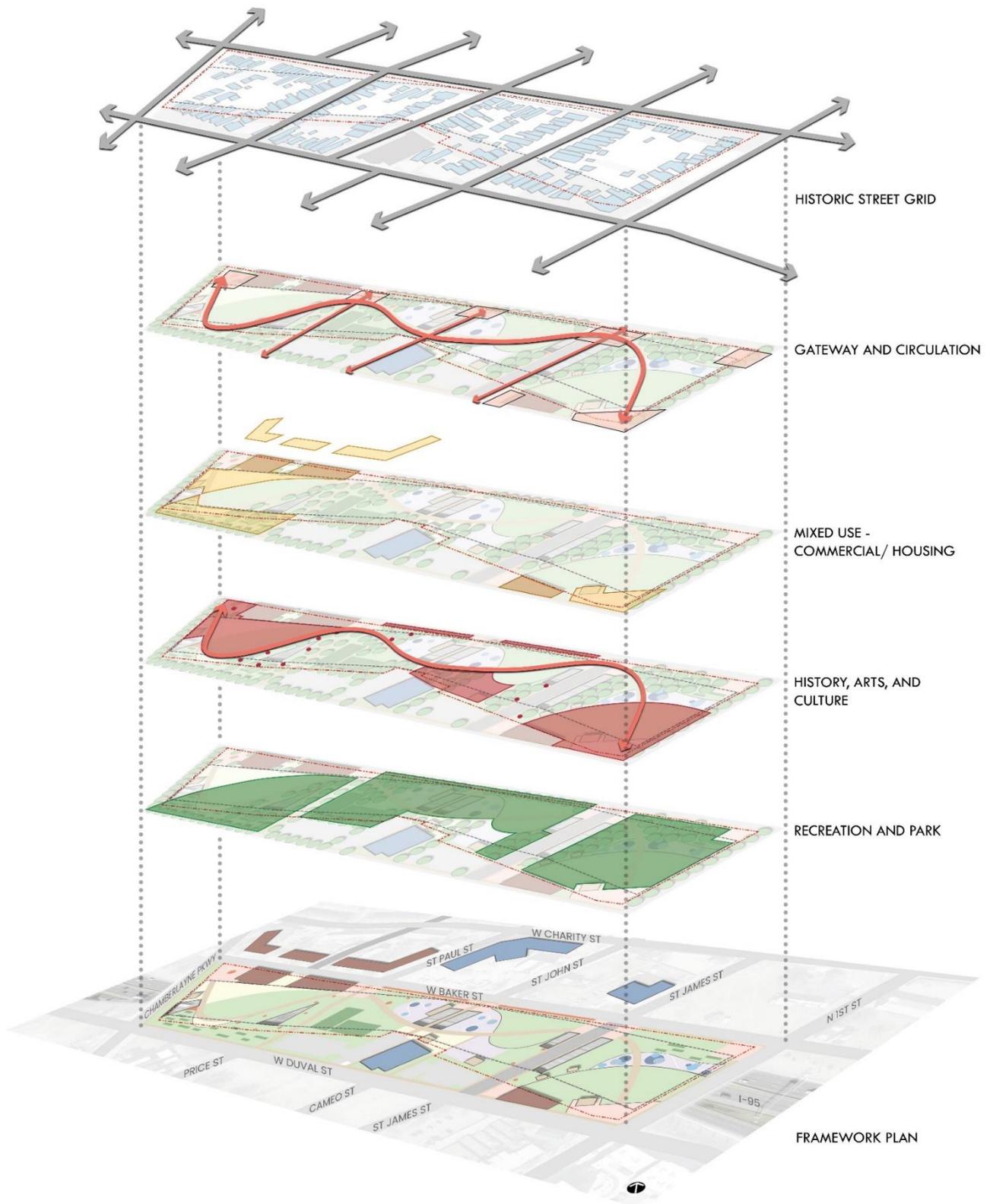


Figure 21. Exploded Axonometric Diagram



**Youth Engagement Space:**

- Build and promote excellence and opportunities in Jackson Ward for youth and personal engagement.
- Provide youth with a space for recreation and leisure.



**Marketplace & Innovation Space:**

- Reestablish the historic neighborhood and opportunities for marketplaces, commerce, and innovation.
- Prioritize Black wealth creation by creating mixed-use, mixed-income home, business, and land ownership opportunities for Black residents.



**Art & Entertainment Space:**

- Integrate arts and entertainment spaces that celebrate history and culture of Jackson Ward and provide a space for community events and entertainment.



**Faith & Contemplative Space:**

- Reconnect Jackson Ward with paths that encourage cultural growth and discovery and provide a space for the community that encourages personal growth and development.

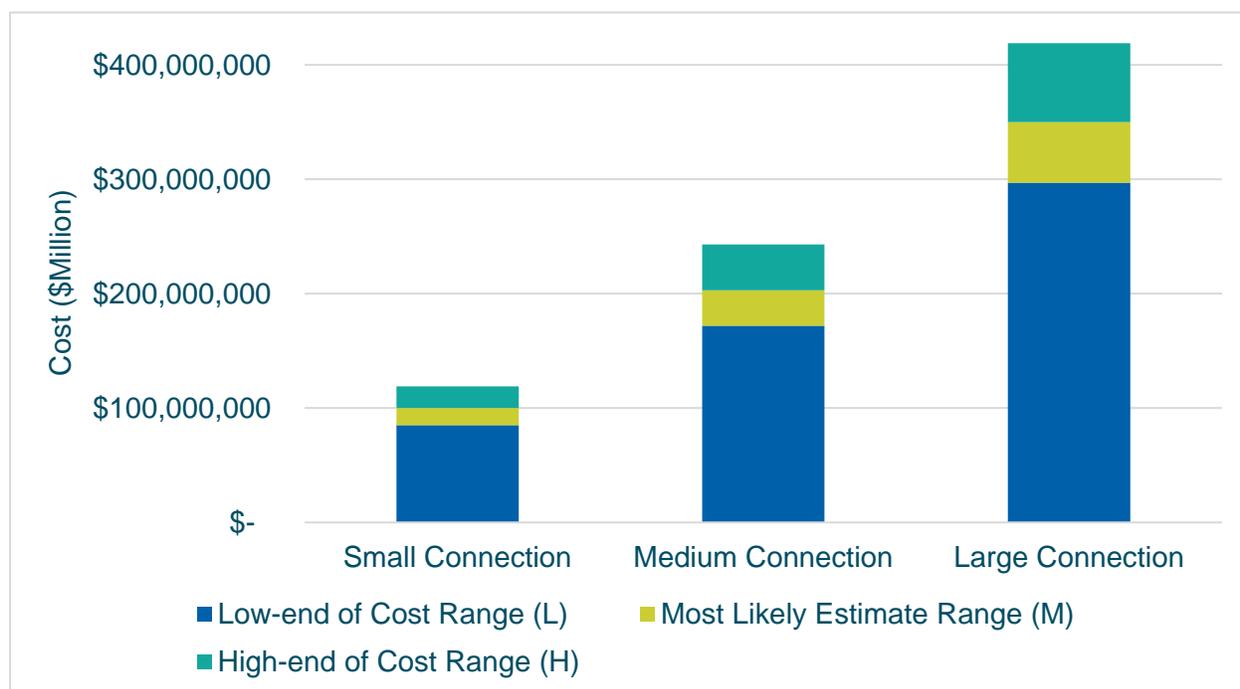


Figure 22. Recommended Framework Plan Conceptual Rendering

### 3.4 Planning-Level Cost Estimate

Due to the preliminary nature of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study, ROM cost ranges were estimated instead of specific cost estimates, as specific program and design elements were not identified through this assessment nor does it include the level of detailed engineering and design necessary to calculate a quantity-based estimate. The ROM cost ranges presented in this document represent a probable opinion of reasonable construction and programming costs, intended to inform potential funding and implementation strategies that are summarized further in **Section 4.1**. As the project advances, it will be critical to utilize more robust analytical tools for developing cost estimates as additional project details are developed.

At this early planning-level stage of the project development process, the ROM cost ranges developed for the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility are inherently developed with a limited amount of information. As a result, the probable opinion of cost is primarily based on an assumed structural cost and includes additional considerations for associated engineering and construction costs, based on past experience and professional judgement, as well as a conservatively applied pre-scoping contingency to allow for project risks and unknown program elements and design features, consistent with VDOT’s *Cost Estimating Manual* for complex projects at the preliminary stages of the project development process<sup>3</sup>. **Figure 23** shows the ROM cost ranges calculated, depending on the level of intervention and implementation strategies that are further described in **Section 4.1**. Elements included in these planning-level cost estimates are summarized below and supporting calculations are included in **Appendix B**. As the project is further defined and matures through the project development process, a quantity-based discipline and item specific estimate that aligns with the standard VDOT approach should be prepared.



**Figure 23. ROM Cost Estimate Ranges**

<sup>3</sup> See Figure 5-5b: Risk and Contingency Process and Sliding Scale – Most Complex (p. 93), which calls for a 40 – 100 percent applied contingency at the early stages of the project development process and estimating.

### 3.4.1 Structural Costs

Structural unit costs represent a unit-based per square footage cost anticipated loading and general program elements, calculated based on the total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64. Separate footage structural costs were established for anticipated roadway and pedestrian bridge connections as well as park/open space areas.

### 3.4.2 Adjacent Approach Work

A percentage of construction costs would be required for vertical integration of any new structure over the interstate in the transition areas adjacent to the new bridge or lid. Where adequate space is anticipated for edge integration (Areas B and E), a percentage cost for approach work was calculated based on the total structural cost.

### 3.4.3 Allowances/Contingencies

Considering the limited project definition at this early planning stage, a considerable contingency was applied to the calculated construction costs to allow for potential project costs associated with utility relocations, drainage, interstate work, maintenance of traffic during construction, and other unknown elements. Consistent with VDOT's *Cost Estimating Manual* for complex projects at the preliminary stages of the project development process, a 40 - 100% contingency was applied to derive a ROM cost range for a potential large, medium, or small-sized connection.

### 3.4.4 Construction Engineering and Inspection

To ensure that all potential expenses that could be incurred through the construction of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, a percentage of the construction subtotal, derived from past experience on construction projects throughout the state, was calculated to account for anticipated required construction engineering and inspection services.

### 3.4.5 PE/Engineering Design

Preliminary engineering and design costs represent expenses associated with all technical disciplines through development of the project until award of a construction contract, or completion of an equivalent procurement method. This includes site planning through final design as well as environmental reviews and permitting. Engineering and design costs were accounted for by multiplying a percentage of the anticipated structural and approach work. This percentage was not applied to unknown allowances and contingencies in order to not artificially inflate the design costs.

### 3.4.6 VDOT Oversight

VDOT oversight costs are required for VDOT construction projects or locally administered projects, as outlined in the Locally Administered Project Manual, to ensure that all procedures, designs, and materials comply with applicable laws, regulations, and specifications. An oversight cost was calculated for both preliminary engineering and design as well as construction.

### 3.4.7 Inflation

Inflation captures a general increase in the rise and fall of the purchasing value of money as the value of currency fluctuates over time. Inflation rates, derived from VDOT's April 2022 *Cost Estimate Workbook*, were applied to both the preliminary engineering and design phase as well as the construction phase, assuming a preliminary engineering start date in 2024 and construction end date in 2029.

## 4 FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

### 4.1 Potential Project Phasing and Implementation Strategies

Understanding the anticipated costs associated with bridging or lidding I-95, the feasibility study assessment included an evaluation of the developable areas to identify potential opportunities to phase the implementation of a future project as a large, medium, or small connection, as previously noted. The identification of potential phasing considered prioritization of multimodal bridge connections, where feasible (i.e. St. James Street), which would allow for additional movement across the interstate and establish an immediate reconnection of the transportation network. Elements of the design themes identified could be incorporated into this bridge connection and as subsequent funding opportunities are identified, more extensive bridge or lid interventions could be advanced, with synergy to the adjacent ongoing projects. Following the St. James Street reconnection, it is anticipated that a small connection could potentially follow between 1st Street and St. James Street, or adjacent to Chamberlayne Parkway. Opportunities to integrate the planned Fall Line Trail and adjacent Jackson Ward redevelopment would be evaluated as these efforts simultaneously advance. **Appendix C** presents a visualization of a potential phasing plan for implementation of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.



In advance of implementing any infrastructure improvements associated with the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, a number of relevant engineering and planning activities are anticipated to be needed to advance the project. The following does not represent an all-inclusive list of activities, but are anticipated to be needed at a future time as the project continues to develop. The activities are not presented in any order of priority:

- *Determine and Define Ownership and Maintenance of the Facility* – Further discussion is necessary to identify agency roles and responsibilities of maintenance and ownership of any new structure over the interstate, as well as identify any potential non-government organization that may participate in the maintenance of the facility or ownership of program elements or activities in a proactive manner.
- *Additional Studies and Analyses* – Detailed studies of potential traffic impacts and completion of necessary environmental reviews and NEPA documentation, if the project involves federal funding, actions, or approvals, would be necessary prior to project construction to develop a complete understanding of the potential transportation and environmental implications and impacts of the project. Additionally, research will be necessary into historical and cultural resources to assess the existing conditions. Deed research and an archival investigation will be utilized to identify descendants and historic imagery for incorporation into the overall project design.
- *Preliminary Engineering and Final Design* – Further engineering and design will be necessary to identify all of the civil, mechanical, and architectural components associated with a new bridge or lid spanning the interstate. These efforts would also inform the refinement of cost estimates and schedules.  
Supporting the engineering and design, it would be beneficial to develop a preferred concept site plan that could be adopted by local and regional governments as a long-term goal for the area, consistent with the *Richmond 300* Master Plan as well as other local and regional planning documents.
- *Incorporate Reconnect Jackson Ward into Relevant Planning Documents* – The Reconnect Jackson Ward project is currently included in the Richmond Regional Transportation Planning Organization’s (RRTPO) Vision Plan of their *ConnectRVA 2045* Long-Range Transportation Plan. For the purposes of funding opportunities and integration with local and regional planning efforts, it will be important for the project to ultimately be adopted into the fiscally constrained portion of the LRTP as well as the federally required long-range State Transportation Improvement Program.
- *Philanthropic Coordination* – Further coordination will be necessary to identify and recruit community sponsors and partners for the development of an organization or foundation tasked with the management and maintenance of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

Additional local history and archival research, establishment of an equitable development plan, philanthropic coordination, and continued public involvement throughout the project development process are among the activities that are anticipated to be beneficial to supporting the successful development and implementation of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project. Furthermore, it will be important to identify potential funding opportunities for advancing the activities referenced above in addition to determining financing strategies for construction of any future improvements. As part of the project development process, it will also be important to carefully consider, understand, and strategically minimize the potential effects of gentrification and displacement. A number of considerations related to these factors and concerns are described in the subsections that follow.

## 4.2 Funding Opportunities

The City of Richmond and its state and regional partners, OIPI and VDOT, as well as the RRTPO, are identifying potential opportunities for financing and implementation.

One such opportunity is the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Discretionary Grant Program, established by Section 11509 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that was signed into public law on November 15, 2021. Through the RCP, an eligible entity may apply for funding to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that reconnect communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including mobility, access, or economic development. The RCP is expected to provide \$1 billion in planning and capital construction grants to be distributed nationwide over the next five years. Per the IIJA, a planning grant may be provided to conduct activities necessary to plan and design a project that removes, retrofits, or mitigates an existing eligible transportation facility to restore community connectivity; to conduct public engagement; and other transportation planning activities. Under the RCP program, capital construction grants will be awarded to carry out projects that remove, retrofit, mitigate, or replace an existing eligible facility with a new facility that reconnects communities.

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced the first Notice of Funding Opportunity under the RCP Discretionary Grant Program on June 29, 2022. The City of Richmond intends to submit an application for a planning grant to continue to advance the development of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

## 4.3 Anti-Displacement, Gentrification, and Reparations

Throughout the process of community engagement and public involvement, the issues of gentrification, displacement, and reparations were key topics of concern from community members. In response, the City of Richmond is actively exploring existing anti-displacement, gentrification, and reparations movements across the United States to help guide potential policy and regulations, much of which extends beyond the bounds of this feasibility assessment. These concerns were mentioned throughout the process of community engagement and focused on providing affordable housing and mixed-use development as well as reparations for the Black community members and descendants who were displaced and suffered as a result of the interstate construction. These are important considerations for the future development of Jackson Ward and RRHA's *Jackson Ward Community Plan* is specifically looking at these issues in the context of Jackson Ward and Gilpin Court.

To ensure that these concerns were acknowledged and to further an understanding of potential anti-displacement, anti-gentrification, and reparations recommendations that could potentially be incorporated into the Reconnect Jackson Ward project or other initiatives and improvements through Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods, the study team conducted research surrounding these issues. This additional research and recommendations can be found in **Appendix D**. The recommendations are not intended to be a commitment of policy or regulatory changes; however, they are meant to inform potential initiatives that could be incorporated into future infrastructure improvements or other initiatives within Jackson Ward and the surrounding community. For example, the anti-displacement housing recommendations identified may be incorporated into the housing plan portion of the Jackson Ward Community Plan and, likewise, the research related to gentrification and reparations initiatives may be considered as part of the neighborhood plan portion of the Jackson Ward Community Plan, which is in the early stages of development at the issuance of this feasibility study.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study was initiated in response to the priorities, goals, and Big Moves identified in the City of Richmond's *Richmond 300: Guide for Growth* master plan, but also in an effort to evaluate the potential feasibility of reunite a community that is currently separated by an interstate facility but connected to the injustice of the past. While preliminary in nature, the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility study evaluates the potential for creating new transportation connections, as well as associated community spaces and the potential for development. This study has identified that it would be technically possible to implement a new bridge or lid structure, although there are key barriers and considerations that should be taken into account as future funding is identified and potential improvements are advanced. In addition to technical considerations, thematic program elements have been identified through community involvement that will be important to incorporate into any future project design. Additionally, policies and programs will need to continue to be carefully evaluated as any improvements advance within Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods, to ensure that they are implemented in an equitable manner, minimizing the potential for displacement and gentrification.

While the lidding of I-95/64 in Jackson Ward would be particularly challenging, the potential opportunities it presents are intriguing and could be meaningfully beneficial. Given the complexities of implementing a new structure within the constrained urban project location, the cost of the undertaking is anticipated to be substantial. As a result, a careful continued community visioning process and additional studies and analyses are recommended, including the preparation of an equitable development plan as well as additional engineering and preliminary design, to ensure that a cost-effective project is advanced that achieves the goal of reconnecting the community. The financial opportunities offered by the RCP Discretionary Program are anticipated to support these important continued efforts. Should the City of Richmond secure additional funding through a RCP planning grant or otherwise, the following activities are recommended to successfully advance the development of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.

- *Traffic Analysis and Impact Study* – A traffic study should be prepared to document the existing and design year operation during the weekday peak hours of the study area roadways associated with the new roadway connection at St. James Street including impacts to traffic, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit operations. Future year analyses will take into consideration the Jackson Ward Community Plan and proposed development in the surrounding vicinity.
- *Environmental Review* – An environmental review of the project, supported by necessary agency coordination and technical analyses, will be required to ensure compliance with NEPA, required for the use of Federal funds for project implementation and impacts to the Interstate System.

As part of the agency coordination associated with the environmental review, coordination will occur with VDOT, as necessary, to incorporate the Reconnect Jackson Ward project in the federally required long-range Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Additionally, coordination will be facilitated with the RRTPO to supply sufficient information for the project to be considered for inclusion in the Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), ConnectRVA 2045, in which the project is currently included in the Vision Plan.

- *Conceptual Design and Preliminary Engineering* – To support the environmental review and identification of potential project impacts, the project design will be advanced to a level of detail sufficient to specify foundation systems; utilities and infrastructure services required to support the landscaping and development on the proposed structure; and identification of drainage systems to collect and distribute surface runoff and subsurface water infiltration.

In order to advance these preliminary engineering efforts, a conceptual site plan should first be prepared, utilizing the design framework established through the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study efforts. Additionally, the site plan development is anticipated to encompass a collaborative effort with the ongoing Jackson Ward Community Plan for the sharing of resources and to ensure the project aligns with the larger community planning efforts. The site plan design should draw upon case studies and similar experiences specifically designing Black spaces. Additionally, and in conjunction with traffic studies, structure design, environmental review, and resultant site plan, roadway infrastructure conceptual plans will be prepared and designate improvements necessary to accommodate the proposed project's goals and intentions for the complete facility. These may include affected roadways within the designated footprint and those impacted by the effects of these significant improvements. Included in these design efforts will be determinations of suitable typical roadway cross-sections, demolition and paving limits, coordination of utilities, drainage needs and storm water management, traffic engineering such as signing and pavement marking, signalization, Intelligent Transportation System items, street lighting, geotechnical subsurface investigations, and constructability determinations.

Upon the development of a conceptual site plan, Stage I bridge plans and a type, size and location (TS&L) report is anticipated to be needed to support the conceptual site plan design. The TS&L report will document the specific structural materials; elevations and preliminary dimensions; plantings and landscape features; and architectural lighting and other architectural features. Accompanying the TS&L report, a refined construction cost estimate and detailed project schedule will be prepared. The development of preliminary engineering plans will be informed by adjacent projects, such as the Belvidere Street Interchange Improvements, and consideration of opportunities for value engineering.

- *Local History and Culture Archival Research* – To inform cultural resources coordination conducted under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as part of the environmental review process, as well as to inform the project design, deed research and an archival investigation will be performed to identify descendants and historic imagery for incorporation into the project design.
- *Philanthropic Coordination* – The identification of community sponsors and partners for the development of a foundation or organization which will be tasked with leading, guiding, and fundraising through the construction phase, subsequent programs and partnerships, and the maintenance of the project site.
- *Community Engagement* – Community engagement and outreach activities will continue to be a critical component of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project, not only to maintain and continue to generate invested public interest in the project, but also to meet the requirements of the NEPA process as well as other state and local design approval requirements.

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# Appendix A

## *Stakeholder and Community Engagement*



RECONNECT  
JACKSON WARD



# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Steering Committee Meeting #1  
January 27, 2022*



# MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** Thursday, January 27, 2022

**Time of Meeting:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Subject:** Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting

**Project:** Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

**Project UPC:** 114874

**Contract Number:** 49401-009

## MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
<b>Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee</b>		
Adam Bond	Ebenezer Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:adam.bond@ebenezerrva.org">adam.bond@ebenezerrva.org</a>
Aria Kirkland-Harris	Ebenezer Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:aria.kirkland-harris@ebenezerrva.org">aria.kirkland-harris@ebenezerrva.org</a>
Billy McMullen	Community Member	<a href="mailto:billymacspeaks@gmail.com">billymacspeaks@gmail.com</a>
Charlene Pitchford	Gilpin Court Tenants Council	<a href="mailto:crprhatenantcommissioner@gmail.com">crprhatenantcommissioner@gmail.com</a>
David Lambert	Eye Que Optical	<a href="mailto:eyequeoptical@gmail.com">eyequeoptical@gmail.com</a>
Desi Wynter	Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority	<a href="mailto:desi.wynter@rrha.com">desi.wynter@rrha.com</a>
Donté McCutchen	Moriah Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:donte.mccutchen@gmail.com">donte.mccutchen@gmail.com</a>
Janis Allen	Historic Jackson Ward Civic Association	<a href="mailto:janisaa55@yahoo.com">janisaa55@yahoo.com</a>
Jerome Legions	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jeromelegions1@gmail.com">jeromelegions1@gmail.com</a>
Jim Hill	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jaschrhill@gmail.com">jaschrhill@gmail.com</a>
Leighton Powell	Community Member	<a href="mailto:leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org">leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org</a>
Marland Buckner	The Black History Museum	<a href="mailto:mbuckner@mbsq.net">mbuckner@mbsq.net</a>
Max Hepp-Buchanan	Venture Richmond	<a href="mailto:mhbuchanan@venturerichmond.com">mhbuchanan@venturerichmond.com</a>
Mecca Harris	ART 180	<a href="mailto:mecca@art180.org">mecca@art180.org</a>
Nate Goodenow	Walter Parks	<a href="mailto:nate@wparks.com">nate@wparks.com</a>
Ron Stallings	Hippodrome	<a href="mailto:rastallings@walkerrow.com">rastallings@walkerrow.com</a>
Zarina Fazaldin	Z&L Historic LLC	<a href="mailto:landzhistoric@msn.com">landzhistoric@msn.com</a>
<b>Office of the Secretary of Transportation – Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment</b>		
Ronique Day	Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:ronique.day@oipi.virginia.gov">ronique.day@oipi.virginia.gov</a>
<b>Virginia Department of Transportation</b>		
Ben Mannell	TMPD Assist. Division Administrator	<a href="mailto:ben.mannell@vdot.virginia.gov">ben.mannell@vdot.virginia.gov</a>
<b>City of Richmond</b>		
Maritza Pechin	PDR-OED Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:maritza.pechin@rva.gov">maritza.pechin@rva.gov</a>
Dironna Clarke	DPW-OETM Administrator	<a href="mailto:dironna.clarke@rva.gov">dironna.clarke@rva.gov</a>
Yessenia Revilla	PDR-OED Planner	<a href="mailto:yessenia.revilla@rva.gov">yessenia.revilla@rva.gov</a>
DeAndrae Spradley	Planner	<a href="mailto:deandrae.spradley@rva.gov">deandrae.spradley@rva.gov</a>
Kelli Rowan	Program Manger	<a href="mailto:kelli.rowan@rva.gov">kelli.rowan@rva.gov</a>

**MEETING ATTENDEES (CONT.):**

<b>Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP</b>		
<b>Caleb Parks</b>	Project Manager	<a href="mailto:cparks@wrallp.com">cparks@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Ebony Walden Consulting/Storefront for Community Design</b>		
<b>Ebony Walden</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:ebony@ebonywalden.com">ebony@ebonywalden.com</a>
<b>Shawn Balon</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:shawn@storefrontrichmond.org">shawn@storefrontrichmond.org</a>
<b>OnPoint Transportation Public Relations</b>		
<b>Mike Carosi</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:mike@communicateonpoint.com">mike@communicateonpoint.com</a>
<b>Windy Campbell</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com">Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com</a>

*Note: A list of additional attendees is enclosed with this meeting summary*

**1. Introductions/Icebreaker**

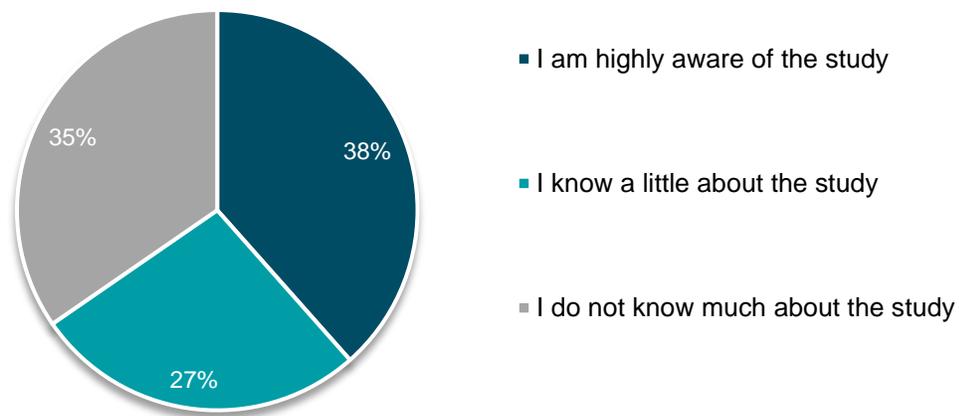
After reviewing the meeting agenda Steering Committee Members introduced themselves, their affiliation, and were asked what excites them about the Reconnect Jackson Ward study.

- Rev. Dr. Adam Bond, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church – *What excites me is the opportunity to connect with steering committee members on the big-picture; what it means to ‘renew community’ within Jackson Ward in addition to what the land and space might look like for the people who are residents of this area.*
- Aria Kirkland-Harris, Director of Stewardship and Community Development Ebenezer Baptist Church – *Excited about green spaces and open places for gathering. Has seen similar projects in DC, NYC and is excited to see what is possible in Jackson Ward.*
- Billy McMullen, former National Football League Philadelphia Eagles player and Richmond native whose father grew up in Jackson Ward – *He’s looking forward to seeing restored physical and mental infrastructure for youth. Works with youth at Carver Elementary.*
- Charlene Pitchford, Commissioner on the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) Board of Commissioners and Gilpin Tenant Council Member – *Present, but not able to introduce herself.*
- David Lambert, resident of Richmond’s Northside 3<sup>rd</sup> Voter District and owner of Eye Que Optical in Jackson Ward north whose father has been here for over 60 years. Eye Que Optical is the first building north of the 1<sup>st</sup> Street Bridge that has been a part of the community for over 60 years – *Potential opportunity for bridge park, but also economic empowerment to permit business to come across the bridge.*
- Desi Wynter, Director of Redevelopment at RRHA – *The word “Reconnect” is significant. Good to see an actual plan as we better this community from the damages that have happened over the past several decades. Has worked closely with Maritza on Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant.*
- Donté McCutchen, resident of Jackson Ward and member of Greater Mt. Moriah Baptist Church on 1<sup>st</sup> Street north of the bridge – *He’ll have a chance to offer insight as well as those family and friends on both sides of the bridge.*
- Janis Allen, President of the Historic Jackson Ward Association and longtime resident of Jackson Ward, whose grandparents and parents grew up here – *Excited about community engagement.*
- Jerome Legions, President of the Carver Area Civic Improvement League – *He’s excited that Carver was included in the project and to enhance Jackson Ward and the community. What affects Carver affects Jackson Ward.*

- Jim Hill, 30-year resident of Carver and member of Carver Area Civic Improvement League. Has heard his neighbors talk about what it was like before the highway came through – *He’s excited for the opportunity to help heal not only the physical damage that was done, but also be able to begin to make reparations to people who were harmed and restore economic vitality to the area and those who were part of it.*
- Leighton Powell, 20-year Jackson Ward resident and preservationist at heart – *Wants more green space and righting the wrongs. Allow Mt. Zion to have the greenspace that was taken from them years ago. Healing of physical and spiritual connections.*
- Marland Buckner, Interim Director of Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia located in Jackson Ward – *It’s one of a handful of unique opportunities that the City is presenting to solve problems.*
- Max Hepp-Buchanan, Director of Riverfront and Downtown Placemaking at Venture Richmond who was also a member of the Richmond 300 advisory council - Big Moves section of plan – *He’s excited to see this get going.*
- Mecca Harris, resident of Jackson Ward and Community and Engagement manager at Art 180 – *Excited to meet others and restore historic impact, especially the youth.*
- Nate Goodenow, architect specializing in urban infill and multi-family development. Office is in Jackson Ward. Likes to take old parking lots and expressways and make them into usable civic spaces that solve needs for housing, greenspace – *Worked on similar project in NYC and saw the healing that it brought.*
- Ron Stallings, resident and property owner in Jackson Ward.
- Zarina Fazaldin – Happy to be a part of the committee.

**Digital Poll Question Part 1:** The Steering Committee was asked, “How aware are you of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study?” The results are shown below.

**How aware are you of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study?**

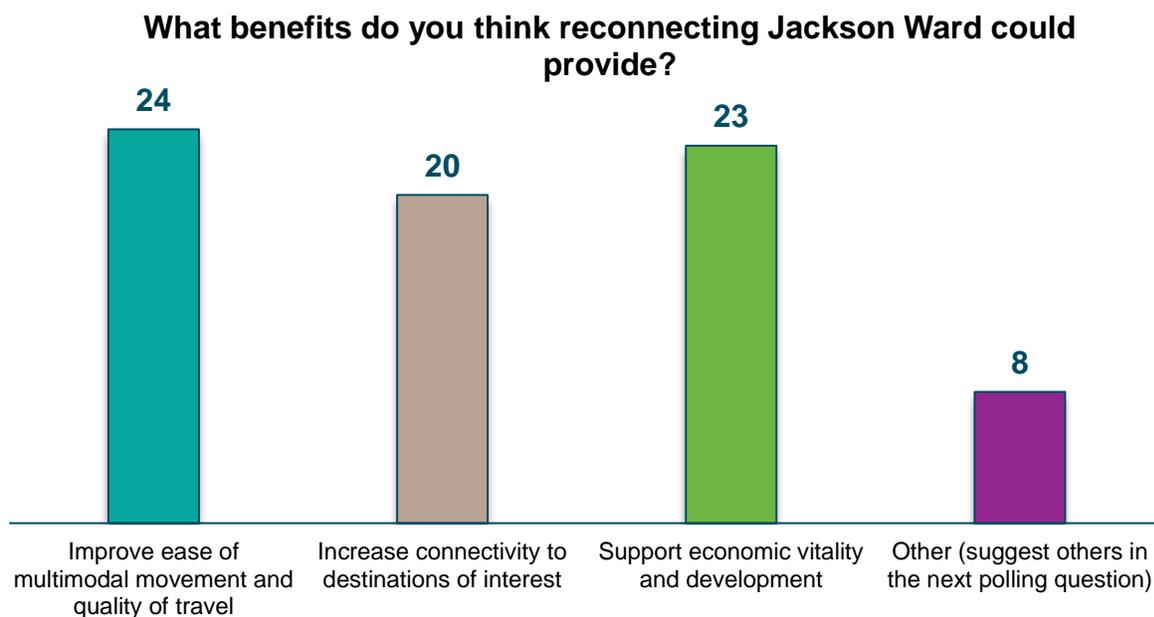


## 2. Outline Study Scope, Goals, and Schedule

Caleb Parks discussed the background of the project and how we got here.

- Reviewed the timeline associated with this neighborhood and construction of the Richmond-Henrico Turnpike, which was redesignated as an interstate facility.
- The initial vision for the study was identified from the six Big Moves initiatives identified in the Richmond 300 Master Plan, adopted by the Richmond City Council in December 2020. One is recapping neighborhoods to try to reknit neighborhoods that were separated by past infrastructure projects.
- The goal of the study is to evaluate the engineering feasibility of physically reconnecting Jackson Ward, Gilpin Court, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- The study process is intended to be community driven and result in the identification of a recommended concept and is anticipated to extend over an approximate six-month period.
- The study is intended to position the City of Richmond to apply for future funding opportunities, primarily the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, which is expected to provide \$350 million in capital construction grants to be distributed nationwide over a 5-year period. Also looking to identify other opportunities through this effort.
- Examples of other similar projects were shown. The cap could provide a roadway connection, bicycle or pedestrian connections, a park, some combination, or other facility over the interstate.

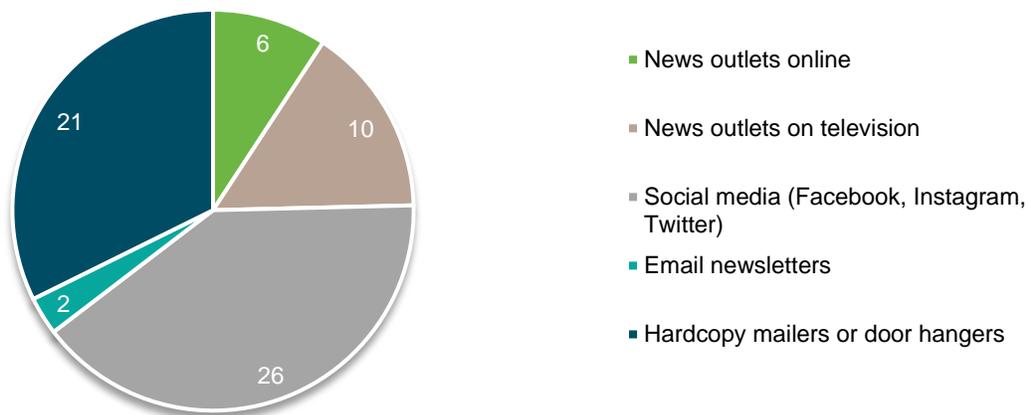
**Digital Poll Question Part 2:** The Steering Committee was asked, “What benefits do you think reconnecting Jackson Ward could provide?” Multiple choices could be selected. The results are shown below.



Other suggestions included: housing, access, pedestrian and bicycles, remembrance, reparative work, community engagement, memorial, reconnected community, improved safety, equity, feel more unified, mental infrastructure, fairness, historical linkage, beautification, and better zoning.

**Digital Poll Question Part 3:** *The Steering Committee was asked, “What are your recommendations for reaching out to the community with information and to get feedback?” Multiple choices could be selected. The results are shown below.*

**What are your recommendations for reaching out to the community with information and to get feedback?**



**3. Review Roles/Commitment of Steering Committee**

Ebony Walden provided an overview of the Steering Committee commitment, roles and responsibilities.

- The Steering Committee will:
  - Assist to engage the community and serve as project ambassadors
  - Share information with the community (neighbors, co-workers, etc.)
  - Help identify partners, outlets, stakeholders, community happenings
  - Attend monthly meetings
- Primary ways of engagement:
  - Three public meetings
  - Four focus group meetings
  - Pop-up events in community, where people are
  - Interviews of up to 10 descendants – looking for stories on history, perspective, and culture
- The Study Team will be hiring two community ambassadors, organizing pop-up events, and distributing doorhangers. The Community Ambassador application was provided: <http://www.storefrontrichmond.org/community-ambassadors>

**4. Questions and Answers**

**Q** (David Lambert): What is estimated timetable for completion?

**A:** June-July. August is when they anticipate funding availability.

**Q** (Marland Buckner): Where does the project sit with the city government? Is this a point-to-point funding play? How does it fit with economic development? What precedence are you looking at across the country?

**A** (Maritza): Any federal funding opportunity requires a local-state match. The City's Office of Equitable Mobility and Transit will help with aligning the capital. Starting at the beginning to make sure we're thinking of funding sources. Not just create a pretty plan – but how it would get paid for. Maritza has spoken with folks in other cities with similar concepts – a park deck in Texas. TXDOT paid for deck; foundations and locally sourced for buildings on top of deck.

**Q** (Max Hepp-Buchanan): What's going to be the biggest determining factor in terms of size and scope? How do we pass from 1 block to a 2 block cap? What's the width/depth of the project?

**A** (Ebony): Feasibility Study will determine how much can go on top of bridge; physical constraints and what are the possibilities from an engineering standpoint.

(Caleb): We are in the very early phases of the study process. We will look at the vision identified in Richmond 300 and see what is feasible between Belvidere and east of 1<sup>st</sup> Street. The ability to implement a cap will be evaluated from a feasibility standpoint. Could be a pedestrian facility, bike or roadway connection.

(Maritza): There are other projects happening in JW/Gilpin; Belvidere interchange; the Fall Line Trail; North-South BRT coming down on Chamberlayne. We will bring in those transportation projects into the feasibility considerations.

(Ebony): We're aware in linking our ideas into funding. State, regional and federal dollars. We're trying to ensure we have some elements of the study to add in the elements of the other projects as well. We hope that we have a study that we can go after federal dollars as well as regional or state.

**Q** (Nate Goodenow): Are there other design engineers contributing?

**A** (Ebony): WRA will produce design concepts. Between now and mid-March, our first community meeting, survey, pop-up meetings. Getting people on board and excited about it. This feedback will go to the designers/engineers – how will this fit into design, and what would it cost? Steering committee will see concepts, choose and prioritize. What is the will of the people around the concept to choose? Community to pick a preferred concept which we would use to get funding to make it happen.

## 5. Open Discussions: Focus Groups/Committee Visioning Meeting

- The study will include interviews and focus groups. The Steering Committee was asked Who should we invite? Who would be potential partners?
- A Google document was distributed to solicit names, contacts, organizations recommended by the Steering Committee.
- There was some discussion on upcoming Community Meeting events and possible locations.
  - The Black History Museum was offered as a possibility within COVID constraints.
  - The Greater Mt. Moriah Baptist Church was offered as a possible meeting location or the St. Luke Legacy Center.

- The North side of the interstate was suggested for future locations to fully engage people who live on that side of the bridge and show the project as inclusive and friendly as possible.
- Wellness Wednesdays at St. Luke Legacy Center, every Wednesdays between 10 AM – 6 PM was suggested as a possible pop-up event location.
- Monumental Events hosted by the Valentine was recommended.
- Sheep Hill Memories, a play about Carver history that included information from interviews with elders that aren't with us now, was suggested for potential story telling. Probably available at VCU library or Community Involvement Office.

## 6. Next Meeting and Next Steps

- Steering committee to provide contacts for possible stakeholders for future focus groups and descendant interviews.
- The study team will take the feedback from this meeting, as well as the form with the stakeholder information, ideas for meetings, connections.
- Additional information regarding the study, including a project fact sheet, would be distributed after the meeting to the Steering Committee to share and spread the word.

## 7. Additional Questions and Answer

**Q:** This is about the construction of the physical bridge. But the design can highlight the culture, the history, the stories of people who were there. History, culture can be incorporated into the design.

**A (Maritza):** *There's a lot of history that we need to elevate. History will be something that we'll be looking to repair and acknowledge what has happened. That's why we're having interviews with descendants, so we can have those stories brought to forefront.*

**Q (Desi Wynter):** Mentioned greater Jackson Ward project, re-development of Gilpin Court and all the way to the convention center. Reconnecting Jackson Ward can influence the greater plan.

**A (Ronique):** *Hearing from the community, the wants and the desires. And ensuring that's actually feasible. Need to be realistic with competitive funding. We want to hear and prioritize what's most important to the community. See how much based on today's dollars, what it looks like. Then we can determine what's feasible. We might have to be creative in seeking out opportunities. Everyone equally wants to be a part of this and see that it happens. As much as you can be engaged, and get others to be engaged, it will affect our outcome.*

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:**

*The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and anyone interested in attending are permitted to register for the meeting. The list below represents additional attendees present at the meeting.*

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# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Steering Committee Meeting #2*  
*February 24, 2022*



# MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** Thursday, February 24, 2022

**Time of Meeting:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Subject:** Steering Committee Meeting #2

**Project:** Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

**Project UPC:** 114874

**Contract Number:** 49401-009

## MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
<b>Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee</b>		
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Aria Kirkland-Harris	Ebenezer Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:aria.kirkland-harris@ebenezerrva.org">aria.kirkland-harris@ebenezerrva.org</a>
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Jim Hill	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jaschrhill@gmail.com">jaschrhill@gmail.com</a>
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<b>City of Richmond</b>		
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<b>Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP</b>		
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Ebony Walden	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:ebony@ebonywalden.com">ebony@ebonywalden.com</a>
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<b>OnPoint Transportation Public Relations</b>		
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**Windy Campbell** | Community Engagement and Coordination | [Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com](mailto:Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com)

*Note: A list of additional attendees is enclosed with this meeting summary.*

## 1. Introductions/Icebreaker

There were a few additions and changes to the Steering Committee list since the January 27, 2022, kickoff meeting. The Steering Committee members were asked to introduce themselves, their affiliation, and to share a favorite place in Jackson Ward or the surrounding neighborhood.

- Rev. Dr. Adam Bond, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church – *Favorite place is Ebenezer Baptist Church.*
- Anedra Bourne, Deputy Executive Director at Venture Richmond – *Anywhere along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.*
- Billy McMullen, former National Football League Philadelphia Eagles player who works with a lot of youth in the area – *Mama J's is "always good to me."*
- Charlene Pitchford – Commissioner on the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) Board of Commissioners and Gilpin Tenant Council Member, also a resident of Gilpin Court.
- David Lambert, licensed dispensing optician owner of Eye Que Optical and family owns other property in area – *Favorite spot is Eye Que Optical "for all your eye care needs" and favorite food spot Jackson Ward is Soddy's and Mama J's.*
- Desi Wynter, Director of Real Estate at Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority – *Love Jackson Ward and enjoys coming to town and walk around the neighborhood.*
- Donté McCutchen member of Greater Mt. Moriah Baptist Church and resident of Jackson Ward – *Favorite place is my church also Barky's Music Store in Jackson Ward.*
- Janis Allen, President of the Historic Jackson Ward Association – *Favorite place is my historic home on Jackson Street.*
- Jerome Legions, President of Carver Area Civic Improvement League – *Favorite bumps up against Jackson Ward and is Carver Elementary (Moore Street) School.*
- Jim Hill, former City of Richmond planner and long-term resident of Carver, member of Carver Area Civic Improvement League – *Loves Mama J's and Big Herms but favorite place is own front porch in Carver.*
- Leighton Powell, 19-year resident of Historic Jackson Ward and Chair of new Historic Jackson Ward Historic Preservation Committee – *Favorite place is my house and wherever foxhound dog wants to walk through the neighborhood.*
- Mecca Harris, Art 180 in Jackson Ward – *Art 180 is favorite place or Saison for French fries.*
- Nate Goodenow, Walter Parks Architects – *Parklet in front of Art 180 and plaza at Gallery 5, big fan of Saison.*

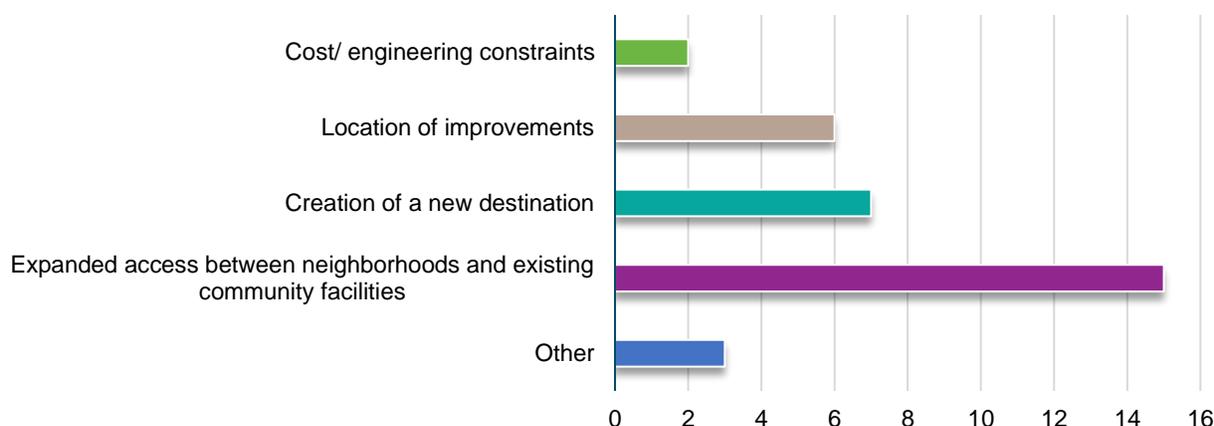
## 2. Study Updates

- A summary of the January 27, 2022 Steering Committee Kickoff meeting was provided including:
  - Results of polling questions; and
  - Review of the study scope.
- Existing conditions and data gathered since the previous meeting were shared including:
  - Demographics and income data from north and south of the interstate and surrounding study area;
  - Opportunities and constraints were briefly summarized;
  - A map was shown illustrating businesses and communities where improved connections and land use could benefit;

- Historic sites and parks were illustrated where opportunities existed as well as regulatory requirements for potential effects to these facilities; and
- Other improvements and transportation projects in area were shown that will need to be taken into account and additional engineering constraints will need to be considered.
- The study is intended to be a community-driven process; the intent is to solicit input from the public first and evaluate that from a feasibility standpoint.

**Digital Poll Question Part 1:** *The Steering Committee was asked, “What parameters do you think are most important to prioritize when evaluating a reconnection of Jackson Ward? (select up to two)” The results are shown below.*

### What parameters do you think are most important to prioritize when evaluating a reconnection of Jackson Ward?



Other suggestions included: Free parking; things to do; public transportation; for the children; better stores; impacts to property values and maintaining affordable housing; housing and other economic benefits to the community displaced by VDOT; enhancing the quality of the neighborhood and city; prioritizing modes - transit, pedestrian, bike access; impacts to businesses during construction; City Bus line and extending the GRTC Pulse Service; reconnect the economic and housing benefits for the community; gentrification potential of the improvements; lighting is very important; resiliency of improvements for future flooding; address the damages highways have caused for communities; housing; economic advancement for families; investing in what was taken away from the community; generational wealth invested strip mall of black owned businesses; free youth program; and entrepreneur education opportunities.

### 3. Questions and Answers

**Q** (Jerome Legions): It bumps up against Carver. What would the impact be as far as traffic is concerned as it bumps up against our neighborhood? Will there be a mode of transportation thru bridge – bike lanes, etc. – will that increase level of traffic going thru Leigh Street in Carver. Already high level of traffic with exit from 95 onto Leigh Street. Will it help to reduce traffic?

**A** (Caleb): *At this stage, nothing is off the table but considerations of reconnecting the existing street grid is a consideration that could be evaluated for its feasibility. We can take it into account as part of study.*

*(Maritza): It's too early to determine anything like that.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): If the bridge is designed for residential, that population impact would have impact on Carver elementary kids. Carver Elementary already overcrowded. How do we consider what will go on the bridge as far as housing is concerned, and what impact would it have on elementary/middle schools?

**A** (Maritza): *Schools are a good point. HUD funded plan for Gilpin/Jackson Ward, that's something we'll be talking about. Increasing housing units will be a school consideration. That will be a bigger consideration than any type of structure going over the highway.*

*(Ebony): Part of process is to figure out what/where. This could be a pedestrian crossing, a park. We're not sure yet. Housing on top of highway seems ambitious but we're looking at what is possible, what are the constraints and mix that with the needs-goals of community. What's the viability? It is all part of the process.*

**Q** (Jim Hill): Great opportunities for improving urban experience of existing residents, inviting other people in to experience the area around Gilpin Court and North Jackson Ward, which used to have so many more people. Bridging could provide real opportunities for additional modes of transportation, making pedestrians and bikes safer. The installation of Belvidere through Jackson Ward and Carver was a dress rehearsal for the interstate. They took out the 600 block of west streets and displaced those neighborhoods to put Belvidere through there. Then much more calamitous turnpike severed North Jackson Ward. Improve safety for crossing between Carver, North and South Jackson Ward.

**Q** (Janice Allen): Are there any parameters? Are you eliminating anything? May be helpful to take options off the table.

**A** (Ebony): *We are trying to figure out what is a priority to connect for the community? It's not a housing project. Reconnecting Jackson Ward. Usually, housing doesn't go over highways. We're trying to see what's important to reconnect. It's a dance of what conceptually is a priority for the community, combined with engineering/cost.*

*(Maritza): Engineering team will help us to determine impacts on community. Design parameters to think about.*

**Q** (Leighton Powell): There are good examples of capping highways in Columbus, Dallas, DC. It might be helpful to show the group what it looks like.

**A** (Ebony): *We will show examples of what has been constructed in other locations/states.*

**Q** (Billy McMullin): Reconnect Jackson Ward is a history thing. How do we maximize what was taken, dollarwise? Billy's father experienced that. Looking at it from a phasing standpoint, if we're going to talk, let's dive in deeper: dollars do matter, but a lot of dollars were lost 2-3 generations ago with demolished homes and displacements. We should have a strong discussion on that. Peoples' parents, grandparents lost lots of dollars, when you go out to the community, you'll hear that.

**Q** (Anedra Bourne): Agrees with Billy. It's part of what the conversation needs to be. It's reinvesting in what was taken away.

**Q** (Jerome Legions): Agrees with both Billy and Anedra. It needs to be a project that will support generational wealth. Who will own the land? City? Or will it be property that developers can buy and develop themselves?

*A (Maritza): Can't answer that question now. Wants to look at current ownership. Great that this study is happening right before the Community Plan. Wealth creation on a bigger scale, housing, etc. Encourage everyone to get involved in RRHA Community Plan.*

*(Ebony): This is a transportation funded project. The community can look at taking advantage of federal transportation dollars in making Richmond competitive, use other planning perspectives to have conversations. This is a springboard for a larger community conversation.*

**Q** (Billy McMullen): Putting a cap on the cost of the project sets a precedence for the rest of the conversations. We are aware of how and when and what was taken. Who owns this? Other cities are using community involvement/sweat equity – co-investing and other creative ways they can get involved. Create something magical.

*A (Ebony): Other projects that are happening around the US that are reimagining. Richmond isn't unique in that. It's a national movement that is happening. <https://freeway-fighters.org/freeway-fighters-network-map-landing-page/>*

**Q** (Jim Hill - typed comment): "Argue for your limitations and they are yours."

*A: This is a great prelude to the community discussion. How we frame it, how we get it out there. Reconnect: need to pave the way to what Billy and Anedra are saying. What does it mean to reconnect? What do you want?*

**Q** (Leighton Powell): We're calling it a "Reconciliation Project".

**Q** (Anedra Bourne): It's a "Reinvestment Project," in what was taken. Use the right themes, don't gloss over truly what was lost.

**Q** (David Lambert): I agree with everyone. It is a transportation project. Land piece established from what point to what point. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to Chamberlayne. Start from there and establish land rights and economic program. Food destination, residential. Define who families were who lost their land – establish a fund to reinvest in them, their businesses.

**Q** (Janis Allen): The planning grants for capital construction that were mentioned in original meeting. Are we moving on a hard schedule to secure applications? Is the City trying to put money behind it as well? How feasible is it?

*A (Dironna): The purpose of this study is to submit a grant, we're very much on a timeframe. We want to tie it to funding requests as we develop scope. That's why we have this engagement timeline. Anticipate funding out in Fall, want our ducks in a row to be competitive.*

#### **4. Community Visioning Meeting Preparation**

- Reviewed Community Meeting event date, time, and purpose
- Flyer – Asked Steering Committee members to share it with at least 10 other people – friends, others, social media. Want as many people as possible. Open House.
- Discussed interest and involvement in the Steering Committee. Five individuals suggested they would help spread the word and four suggested they could help volunteer or staff future events.
- Asked Steering Committee to help get the word out. If unable to attend, everyone was requested to complete a study survey.

## 5. Review Community Engagement Plan and Next Steps

- Discussed future pop-up events and requested input from the Steering Committee to let us know any events.
  - There was a suggestion to look at Kanawha Plaza as a possible location for a pop-up event so that the community could understand the intended concept. This will be considered; however, the goal is to focus on events within Jackson Ward and the surrounding neighborhoods.
  - There is a request for presentations to be prepared for the Carver Civic Association meeting in April as well as the Coalition of Civic Associations.
  - An additional request for a presentation to the Historic Jackson Ward Civic Association on March 15.
  - FeedMore events, when people are waiting in line for food, were suggested.
  - Calvin Center and Cheryle Thompson at RRHA were suggested as ambassadors that could go out in March to do surveys (could include foodbanks).
  - There is a feeding every day for lunch at Greater Mount Moriah that would be a great location to meet with the community.
- Discussed project ambassadors that will be hired to attend events and engage in conversations.

## 6. Open Discussion: Update Stakeholder List

- Requested additional stakeholders or possible interested individuals that may help with study
- Also looking for descendants to interview. Descendants of those who had their land taken away and were impacted. Telling of those stories. Narrative vs. transportation vs. economic development. The steering committee was requested to share suggested names.

**Q** (Jerome Legions): What are you going to do with their stories, archive them? Name this street after so and so? Need to do more than say we have this in our archives. As far as reconciliation, why aren't we talking to people who currently live in these neighborhoods now?

**A** (Ebony Walden): *We want to know their personal experience, what they want to see in the future. Ideas of how to commemorate people's stories are wonderful ways to figure out how to share this in the future.*

**Q** (Donte McCutchen): I am adamant that Gilpin residents are informed as much as possible, also looking for other persons who were affected by the highway: there are Navy Hill residents who still are living. Not just Jackson Ward residents and descendants. Speaking on behalf of his family, who lived in both areas. We might want to talk to Navy Hill residents as well. More inclusive, not so commercialized and just saying Jackson Ward. We should use the language, "Navy Hill" verbiage when we're posting. We can't speak fully about Jackson Ward and ignore Navy Hill. Even if in small print. In the call for stories, we don't want to leave former Navy Hill residents/descendants out. JW is not the only thing that exists. Create camaraderie, healing. Don't forget all things that go on in that area.

**A** (Ebony Walden): *Let us know who they are, give us their names. We'll try to follow up.*

*(Caleb Parks): We say in documentation we're reconnecting JW and surrounding neighborhoods but want to make sure it's understood the intent is to consider Carver, Gilpin, Navy Hill. We will make sure those names are included in the documentation.*

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:**

*The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and anyone interested in attending are permitted to register for the meeting. The list below represents additional attendees present at the meeting.*

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# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Steering Committee Meeting #3*  
*March 23, 2022*



# MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** Thursday, March 23, 2022

**Time of Meeting:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Subject:** Steering Committee Meeting #3

**Project:** Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

**Project UPC:** 114874

**Contract Number:** 49401-009

## MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
<b>Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee</b>		
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Billy McMullen	Community Member	<a href="mailto:billymacspeaks@gmail.com">billymacspeaks@gmail.com</a>
Charlene Pitchford	Gilpin Court Tenants Council	<a href="mailto:crprhatenantcommissioner@gmail.com">crprhatenantcommissioner@gmail.com</a>
David Lambert	Eye Que Optical	<a href="mailto:eyequeoptical@gmail.com">eyequeoptical@gmail.com</a>
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Donté McCutchen	Moriah Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:donte.mccutchen@gmail.com">donte.mccutchen@gmail.com</a>
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Jim Hill	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jaschrhill@gmail.com">jaschrhill@gmail.com</a>
Leighton Powell	Community Member	<a href="mailto:leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org">leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org</a>
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<b>Office of the Secretary of Transportation – Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment</b>		
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<b>City of Richmond</b>		
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Kelli Rowan	Program Manger	<a href="mailto:kelli.rowan@rva.gov">kelli.rowan@rva.gov</a>

**MEETING ATTENDEES (CONT.):**

<b>Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP</b>		
<b>Caleb Parks</b>	Project Manager	<a href="mailto:cparks@wrallp.com">cparks@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Ebony Walden Consulting/Storefront for Community Design</b>		
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<b>Rummel, Klepper and Kahl, LLP (RK&amp;K)</b>		
<b>Stuart Samberg</b>	I-95/Belvidere Interchange STARS Study	<a href="mailto:mike@communicateonpoint.com">mike@communicateonpoint.com</a>

*Note: A list of additional attendees is enclosed with this meeting summary*

**1. Introductions/Icebreaker**

- After reviewing the meeting agenda Steering Committee Members introduced themselves, their affiliation, and were asked what excites them about the Reconnect Jackson Ward study.
  - Attendance taken
  - Update was given on community event scheduled for beginning of month – overview of museum interactive stations – 7 stations – focus on benefits and input on possible locations to consider and feedback on program elements to consider
  - Feedback heard – under 100 attendees – 1<sup>st</sup> station – reconnect means – Station – parks and open space – paths and bicycle pedestrian – cultural entertainment
  - Where in project corridor to see connection
    - 6<sup>th</sup> Mount Zion
  - Pop up events summary – March 3<sup>rd</sup> community event – share survey and spread awareness
  
- **Digital Poll Questions Part 1:** Word or phrase use to highlight Community Event or your involvement with the RJW Feasibility Study so far? (Open ended)

<b>What is a word or phrase that you would use to highlight Community Event or your involvement with the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study so far?</b>
Inspirational!
Good discussion around the location of the connection
inclusive
Interesting
engaged
Collaborative
interest, engaging, personal stories
impactful
Inconclusive

## 2. Study Updates

- A summary of the March 24, 2022, Steering Committee meeting was provided including:
  - Results of the polling questions
  - Review of the study scope
- Public survey – closes March 31, 2022
  - Over 250 respondents – hard copy or online
  - Link in chat to survey – sent out after meeting too
- Public survey summary –only 40 total live in GP, carver and JW, people in these areas should be targeted for summary.

**Q** (Anedra Bourne): Slide of proposed locations for potential connection – Has there been discussion of utilizing existing cross of interstate or rehabbing that structure?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *Yes, however, conditions within each area are different. Area F includes an existing 1<sup>st</sup> street crossing. Based on public feedback and what to prioritize, the type of connection needed, and the existing street system, each area is different.*

**Q** (Anedra Bourne): The existing bridge may or may not be open, but it is not being utilized, a secondary bridge is.

**A**(Caleb Parks): *The existing facility could offer additional option, but current traffic situation must be taken into account. The primary directive of the project is to create new connection.*

*(Ebony Walden): For areas E to F, how the existing facility is utilized is based on the elements of the connection that people want. Look at these elements and then consider expand existing or have connection elsewhere.*

- Public Survey Summary – summary of responses to date – incorporate into existing facilities – park or open space (necessitates expansion of facility or new facility)

(Ben Mannell): locations slide – Due to overhang difficulties, the first street bridge rehabilitation project, which is presently part of a design-build contract, is moving forward. It will replace the existing bridge in kind and provide amenities.

**Q** (Michael Hallmark): My question is on the width of the connection. These areas all look to be a block wide. Is there a built in limitation to overall width, cost, etc.? Having a connection of sufficient area (width) is critical to separating this concept from simply being a wide 'bridge' to being an area that can provide real community cohesion.

**A** *How to maintain existing facilities*

*Responses were even across board for connection; however, areas C and D are slightly more preferred than other areas. What are potential new connections and the benefits/drawbacks of them?*

**Q** (Leighton Powell): Gilpin Court is a part of Jackson Ward and should be referred to as such.

**A** *(Ebony Walden): Specific engagement from the Gilpin Court community is necessary. Responses were separated to see the location of the resident. Wording is highly sensitive and impacts how and who responds.*

**Q** (Leighton Powell): Separate into Jackson Ward North and Jackson Ward South

**Q** (Janis Allen): Where are the boundaries for Jackson Ward North and Jackson Ward South

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *Consideration is necessary of the differences between Jackson Ward North and Jackson Ward South and what specific outreach or strategies are best for each location.*

**Q** (Donte McCutchen): Specific residents lie outside of the Gilpin Ct area but should still be considered in outreach, i.e., persons north of 95, non-public housing residents, and residents not in the N JW and Gilpin Ct housing development.

**A** (Ebony Walden): *The boundaries can change to north of interstate / north JW to incorporate people not currently included.*

- Public survey summary – summary of responses to date – Q3 and Q4 –

(Caleb Parks): Evaluation methods used to identify wanted connections or concepts. These concepts and connections should be kept in mind with evaluation measures and internal considerations to evaluate effectiveness of concepts for possible benefits.

- 1 – reconnect history and place –
- Rank higher on survey responses –
- Providing a percentage point – rough sketch of area D – directly adjacent to church – top contender for public input – establish walkable area within ¼ mile for concepts
- Measure – minimize existing grade and new facility
- Mobility – How do we incorporate existing facilities and new connections? What are the limitations and options for current connections to be improved and new connections built?

**Q** (Kelli Rowan): A lot of the connectivity between these locations is proximity based. An option that exists is the accessibility tool (PlanRVA) that gives relevancy to where those residents are trying to get to? How have we measured accessibility so far?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *This information can be analyzed using streetlight data, which provides cell phone tracking information about walking patterns of residents to determine current accessibility and patterns.*

**Q** (Kelli Rowan): How do current O/D pairs create circuitries? PlanRVA and RVA use the accessibility tool for project prioritization.

**A** (Caleb Parks): *We can look into the accessibility tools to see how to incorporate them into this project.*

**Q** (Janis Allen): Did people sign in and identify where they lived at the beginning of the meeting?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *Sign in was included but not with resident location.*

(Ebony Walden): *For next time, we should put a check box on the sign in sheet for people to include if they live in Jackson Ward, Gilpin Ct, or other Richmond areas.*

**Q** (Janis Allen): How do we increase the public response to the surveys? What are ways to encourage more people to take the survey?

**A** (*Caleb Parks/Shawn Balon*): 25 to 30 people attended the event and took the survey, as well as a link, to share with family and friends. Survey should be shared with neighbors, family, friends, etc. to increase responses.

(*Ebony Walden*): Try to encourage the public to share with 10 people they know, people are more likely to respond to the survey if they know a friend or loved one is the one who sent it to them.

**Q** (*Anedra Bourne*): Are there means to have the neighborhood associations send a text link to different audiences who may not own a computer and might instead do it from their phones?

**A** (*Shawn Balon*): Community ambassadors are passing out flyers, giving them the opportunity to run into anyone and provide them with a link to the survey. Charlene has been doing survey with residents with the goal of getting paper copies to residents to increase survey response.

**Q** (*Michael Hallmark*): What is the size of the option area based on? Funding? Etc.? How is that included in the formula?

**A** (*Caleb Parks*): It is based on established structural areas incorporating existing street network and comparing to historic street network. For the areas that are within each block, the idea is to look to identify developable areas from structure standpoint as well as a monetary standpoint.

**Q** (*Michael Hallmark*): Could the area be 3 to four blocks wide, or include multiple areas, such as B through E? How do we ensure that this project is large enough to not be just creating a connection between north and south but give them an area to reconnect?

**A** (*Maritza Pechin*): It is not limited to a block but is going to be the whole area. Factors taken into consideration are what makes the most sense given current constraints, what is best for the community, and what does the community value.

**Q** (*Michael Hallmark*): opportunity to send side email – catch up on side email – look at precedents out there

**A** (*Caleb Parks*): Where is the most interest, where does the community most want to see a connection? How could this be developed through a block connection or with several blocks? Cost and constraints to height and clearance must be considered.

(*Stuart Samberg*) Provided an overview of the 95/64 Belvidere improvements study. Current issue of weaving and aggressive driving

- Noticeable improvements in peak period
- Additional connection

**Q** (*Anedra Bourne*): How does the Belvidere study impact other future transportation projects?

**A** (*Ben Mannell*): In order to evaluate future renovations and enhancements, the Belvidere study examines the intersection of Belvidere 95 and 64. desired financing from CVTA or Smart Scale; regional gas tax; several communities represented; imposed regional gas tax; locally generated; applied to transportation projects; priority list of projects being established; Belvidere study; funding for that; proposed as SS - to compete for state financing as well - the

*same could be said for RJW - grant pot of monies - intended for reuniting communities - chance to get money from state, federal, and local sources. The best course of action is to look at a combination of funds to have the best leverage. This has before been used to CVTA for consideration, can be submitted under Smart Scale, better success in obtaining federal grants and increased local or state financing.*

*(Maritza Pechin): The Master Plan included an idea from Jackson Ward, but most people spoke without regard to the master plan, according to Dironna, chair of CVTA's financial department. We must comprehend from a physical standpoint what this reconnecting signifies. What different possibilities and scenarios are there for low, middle, and high costs? Having a project to apply for and something to apply with in terms of infrastructure; the ideas are considerably further along; this procedure is to move us closer to receiving the cash \$ - huge.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): Is it taking (Belvidere St) consideration south side of leigh st is narrow – what is considered from exit from interstate – a lot of more traffic onto leigh st –

**A** (Caleb Parks): *Follow up on transportation analysis to answer questions – Stuart – Will send presentation to Caleb and answer questions.*

(Ebony Walden): For the next public meeting, we will be presenting ideas on how to move forward. In addition, a product update on evaluations and strategies should be available for the public. The survey should again be shared with the attendees of the meeting and encouraged to share it with family and friends.

- *Date of events*
- *Caleb follow up with invites – meet on 21<sup>st</sup> April – roll out concepts and community event*



# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Steering Committee Meeting #4*  
*April 21, 2022*



# MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** Thursday, April 21, 2022

**Time of Meeting:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Subject:** Steering Committee Virtual Meeting #4

**Project:** Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

**Project UPC:** 114874

**Contract Number:** 49401-009

## MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
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**1. Introductions/Roll Call**

- Overview of Agenda, Ground Rules, Introductions
  - Project Partners (City of Richmond, OIPI, VDOT)
  - Study Team
  - Steering Committee

**2. Project Vision**

- Public Survey closed 3/31; we had great feedback from that, and the first community event (March 3) asked what reconnecting means to you. Based on great feedback, we came up with a vision statement.
- We’re seeking the Steering Committee’s buy-in on vision statement to help inform continued evaluation. Vision statement will be included in study documentation.
- **Review Draft Vision Statement**
  - Study Scope – reconnecting over the highway, an opportunity to repair, rebuild, reknit the 2 sides of Jackson Ward. Looking at possible connections.
  - Reviewed possible vision statements.
- **Digital Poll:**
  - Asked Steering Committee for feedback on what vision statements may resonate with them, also suggested combinations. Keep this vision in mind as we look through evaluations and decisions we talk through.

What possible amenity themes would you like to see prioritized?	Votes
Connect	7
Celebrate	0
Socialize	3
Play	4
Arts and Culture	6

**3. Overview of Developable Areas and Feasibility**

- Engineering Considerations / Summary of Structural Assessment Areas  
Team has been looking at developable structural areas. Several important engineering considerations:
  - Meet the vertical clearance that’s required to maintain traffic flow on interstate. VDOT will require any new structure to maintain at least a 16-foot vertical clearance over interstate in order to allow traffic flow.
  - Horizontal clearance: Belvidere St. Interchange Improvements will be critical to consider as well as existing infrastructure
  - From the 351 respondents on the survey, the connection components considered to be important: 80% of survey respondents suggested sidewalks or paths are very important. 66% feel that Parks & Open Spaces are very important. Historic Markers & Murals also were identified as important components.
  - Make sure that any structural elements could support these types of facilities.
  - Weight, load levels informed the depth of the structural elements that would be required. 2 load levels:
    - Accommodate sidewalks and paths
    - Accommodate parks & open spaces
  - Transition areas between new structures could present opportunities for new development.

- The Study Team shared a new cut at where physically possible to connect a new structure from one side of interstate to the other. A block-by-block view of project area shows where we can incorporate a section. Showed vertical clearances required in each area. Show appropriate horizontal clearance to accommodate existing and future improvements (Belvidere Interchange Improvements, Chamberlayne Parkway, others). Need to make sure any structure can span or accommodate those improvements. Consider feasibility or practicality of implementing improvements.
  - **Area A:** Availability based on space to place new structure is limited, so here we identified minimal improvements, such as a bicycle or pedestrian crossing. Area A is problematic because it conflicts with the Belvidere St. improvements and will not allow for a community gathering space as aligned in the Project Vision. As a result, we are going to recommend that Area A is infeasible for any type of future connections.
  - **Areas B, C, D, E:** They do offer opportunities for development and types of uses. Areas D&E: We will need to take into consideration the adjacency of Sixth Mount Zion Church.
  - **Area F:** Vertical elevation required clearance. 16-foot vertical clearance and not a lot of area to transition back down. Limited area for transitioning and extensive grade separation – not a feasible area.
  - **Feasibility:** Areas between Chamberlayne Parkway to North 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

#### 4. Questions and Answers

(Donté McCutchen): Bike lanes are a huge headache in Jackson Ward's one-way streets.

**Q** (Janis Allen): Is someone from Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church represented on the Steering Committee?  
**A** (Caleb Parks): *We did reach out but based on schedules, we haven't been able to get participation there. We will continue to coordinate with the church should the project move forward. Focus group possibility, too.*

**Q** (Kelli Rowan): Will all the alternatives be assessed with metrics shown from the last meeting?  
**A** (Caleb Parks): *Yes. We will talk soon about that.*

(Janis Allen): Vision Statement #5 makes it seem that Jackson Ward is not known historically as a black community. It's the history that we want to hold onto. The black history seems to have been lost.

**Q** (Leighton Powell): It's important to a lot of people to include Black History in the project scope  
**A** (Caleb Parks): *We'll acknowledge the historical black history and economic vitality. It's an important piece that got dropped off.*

**Q** (Donté McCutchen): The adjacency to the church: Will it be connected to the church?  
**A** (Caleb Parks): *We want to make sure that we're tracking the adjacency to the church and its historic properties. Could represent some constraints as the design develops, but there may be opportunities to incorporate elements. We'll make sure we're in close contact with Sixth Mt. Zion in the process.*

**Q** (Donté McCutchen): As we move forward, I would love to be a part of this conversation.  
**A** (Caleb Parks): *We will talk about that in terms of phasing as the design advances and discussions with the church.*

*(Ebony Walden): We have a number of focus groups. We can do one with Sixth Mt. Zion once we know where and what the specific connection will be. Church will be a major player in terms of where it can go.*

**Q** (Kelli Rowan): Do we have an inventory of other historic properties and cultural sites? What's the process to define the vision?

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *We have the data; we shared it at first community event, and it can be provided.*

*(Caleb Parks): COR has gone through a lot of effort to review historic maps and document the conditions that were existing prior to construction of interstate. We also want to look at opportunities to reconnect the street grid. There may be some opportunities for standard roadway bridges, or with a bike/pedestrian connection.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): With the height clearance, I'm concerned that the bridges will create places for homeless people. How do you take care of that potential issue it might create?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *This is helpful feedback. We'll take it into consideration as the design advances. Maintenance considerations need to be incorporated.*

**5. Evaluation Considerations**

- Weighting Evaluation Factors
  - Prioritization of Structural Assessment Areas
  - We've identified these feasible developable areas. Now we'll look to prioritize development and consider possible phasing of sections.
  
- Public Feedback on benefits of reconnecting Jackson Ward:
  - Reconnecting to the history of people and place
  - Support economy/growth.
  
- Digital Poll Question:

What are your initial thoughts on the evaluation criteria?	Votes
Looks good! I understand and agree with it.	6
It's okay. I am not sure I fully understand but it seems reasonable to me.	3
I am confused and would like to see more information.	3
I understand but do not agree with it.	2

- The 3 feasible concepts that we're looking to advance designs:
  - Chamberlayne to 1<sup>st</sup> Street: 5 acres of potential development
  - Blocks closest to Chamberlayne (B) and blocks closest to 1<sup>st</sup> Street (E): 2 ½ acres
  - Lean concept (area E) with a roadway pedestrian connection to St. James St.: 1 ½ acres

**6. Questions and Answers**

**Q** (Jerome Legions): Anything other than Concept 1 seems like a disservice. Let's see what you can do to make that work.

**A** (Caleb Parks): *We want to develop a number of levels of intervention. A lot will depend on funding opportunities. These concepts could be considered in phasing if we only have limited funds to start with.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): I'd be concerned about doing Concept 3 first – that you'd never get back to Concepts 2 or 1. Especially with Gilpin Court, you should expand Concept 1 or 2 to go deeper into Gilpin Court? This could help to revitalize that neighborhood as well through RRHA.

**A** (Caleb Parks): *It's something to be aware of, and we're working with the City on the redevelopment efforts in Gilpin Court.*

**A** (Ebony Walden): *The difference in the concepts has to do with funding. Whatever concept comes up needs to be financially feasible.*

(Leighton Powell): The last poll: I voted for #1. I like it, but I think there's a lot more work to be done on the messaging. This is a real opportunity to talk about Jackson Ward, what it's been through, and it's a great opportunity to educate Richmonders on what this neighborhood means to the city.

**Q** (Kelli Rowan): Are segments C&D popular public choices?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *The feedback we got from the public was the same across the board, but areas C&D got the most votes from the public comments.*

(Maritza Pechin): *Are you saying we'll eliminate some of these concepts?*

(Caleb Parks): *We're not suggesting taking any area off the table, but of the feasible areas for development of a connection, we'll be looking to help prioritize them. Our initial recommendation: If we have to start lean, then we would start with E. Then with B and subsequently C and D. We are not looking to remove anything from the table, we're just looking at possible phasing opportunities.*

(Maritza Pechin): *Programming and how we design it will help the group understand the potential of these different areas.*

**Q** (Jerome Allen): What are the property owners around the areas saying? Homeowners? Landlords? Retailers? What kind of buy in do you have from them?

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *We want to invite more conversations with these individuals. Highlight the meeting next week among residents and business owners. Many of you on the steering committee are business owners or residents in Jackson Ward. Getting your thoughts, your neighbors and friends' thoughts, is really important.*

(Caleb Parks): *The April 28 community event will give additional feedback from community members. Also, we are planning future focus groups as we start looking at areas for program elements.*

(Ebony Walden): *If you know those folks, encourage them to come to our meetings. Steering Committee is our eyes and ears. Please continue to advertise these engagement opportunities.*

(Janis Allen): I am concerned that some key people invited to the Steering Committee table are dropping off.

(Jerome Legions): When people start seeing a true rendering of the project, you'll get more feedback.

**Q** (Jerome Legions): Is there a zoning change that's required for this?

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *No. This is public right of way. It's not zoned. It's a good question, TBD are approvals by VDOT, FHA, City. Building the deck, vs. building what's on top. Other cities have done it; we have to figure out how to do it in Richmond, and how to finance it. It would not be a zoning approval, however.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): If I was a property owner, I might want to change what I have if I see a connection coming.

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *This is really good to determine now, before we jump into the bigger community plan for all of Jackson Ward. What is selected as the preferred alternative can help us define the future land use and zoning for all of Jackson Ward. Transportation improvements, park improvements, and land use are all closely related.*

(Caleb Parks): *There will be approvals from VDOT and FHA, but this is helpful feedback.*

## 7. Possible Program Elements

(Tristan Cleveland): Shared how we're developing program elements: the "What". We've developed some themes for possible programming and amenities based on public feedback from the survey and at events.

- 5 Themes: Connect. Celebrate. Socialize. Play. History Arts & Culture.
  - Connect: Transportation connection through bike lanes, multi-use trail, pedestrian bridge, vehicular bridge.
  - Celebrate: Larger spaces where we come together to celebrate – amphitheater, event plaza, vendor court, open lawns.
  - Socialize: Picnics areas, barbeque areas, seating areas, community gardens, reading gardens, shade structures. Opportunities for people to engage with each other.
  - Play: Recreational – playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment, teen gathering, skate park, tennis-pickleball, basketball courts.
  - History Arts & Culture – these items are flexible and can fit in anywhere. Art installations, historic monuments, interpretative panels.
  - Shade trees, benches, landscaping were high priorities based on community feedback. Those items will be integrated into whatever the final amenities are.

(Tristan Cleveland): These will get us to start thinking about where these “what’s” can be placed. Engaging the steering committee to help us figure out the priorities for the What’s. Next public meeting, we will lay out specifically where they’ll be laid out.

- Digital Poll Question: What are your prioritized categories?

What possible amenity themes would you like to see prioritized?	Votes
Connect	7
Celebrate	0
Socialize	3
Play	4
Arts and Culture	6

- Helpful to have initial feedback from Steering Committee on this as we take this to the public.

**8. Upcoming Community Events – April 28 from 6-8pm @ Ebenezer Baptist Church**

- Overview and Format: Presentation w/ Q&A followed by Open House
- Important to spread the word to business and property owners.

**9. Final Questions**

(Janis Allen): When we talk about “connect”, it’s still missing something. Connect Jackson Ward implies something else.

**Q** (Janis Allen): Corrections need to be made to some of the boards at the Black History Museum. Have those corrections have been made?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *We will have different displays than what was presented at Black History Museum. If there are corrections or observations, please share that with the Study Team.*

*(Ebony Walden): April 28 will be different boards. The boards will focus more on feedback and decisions this time.*

(Jim Hill): Sixth Mount Zion’s participation will be vital. How permeable they allow their property will be will determine how good a connection from Duvall Street. Church runs across B C D E

**Q** (Jim Hill): Historic connections: Pedestrian/bike connections should be integrated with anything we do. Vehicular bridges need to be distinctly different than everything we have.

**A** (Caleb Parks): *We are now looking at design elements. We’ve established the “where” and we’ll be looking at the “what” and looking forward to continuing these discussions next week.*

ADJOURN.

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:**

*The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and anyone interested in attending are permitted to register for the meeting. The list below represents additional attendees present at the meeting.*

Name	Email
Leo Mantey	<a href="mailto:Leo.Mantey@rva.gov">Leo.Mantey@rva.gov</a>
RRHA RECD	<a href="mailto:info@rrha.com">info@rrha.com</a>



# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Steering Committee Meeting #5  
June 23, 2022*



# MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** Thursday, June 23, 2022

**Time of Meeting:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Subject:** Steering Committee Virtual Meeting #5

**Project:** Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

**Project UPC:** 114874

**Contract Number:** 49401-009

## MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
<b>Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee</b>		
<b>Anebra Bourne</b>	Venture Richmond	<a href="mailto:abourne@venturerichmond.com">abourne@venturerichmond.com</a>
<b>Billy McMullen</b>	Community Member	<a href="mailto:billymacspeaks@gmail.com">billymacspeaks@gmail.com</a>
<b>Charlene Pitchford</b>	Gilpin Court Tenants Council	<a href="mailto:crprhateenantcommissioner@gmail.com">crprhateenantcommissioner@gmail.com</a>
<b>David Lambert</b>	Eye Que Optical	<a href="mailto:eyequeoptical@gmail.com">eyequeoptical@gmail.com</a>
<b>Desi Wynter</b>	Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority	<a href="mailto:desi.wynter@rrha.com">desi.wynter@rrha.com</a>
<b>Donté McCutchen</b>	Moriah Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:donte.mccutchen@gmail.com">donte.mccutchen@gmail.com</a>
<b>Janis Allen</b>	Historic Jackson Ward Civic Association	<a href="mailto:janisaa55@yahoo.com">janisaa55@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Jerome Legions</b>	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jeromelegions1@gmail.com">jeromelegions1@gmail.com</a>
<b>Jim Hill</b>	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jaschrhill@gmail.com">jaschrhill@gmail.com</a>
<b>Leighton Powell</b>	Community Member	<a href="mailto:leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org">leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org</a>
<b>Nate Goodenow</b>	Walter Parks	<a href="mailto:nate@wparks.com">nate@wparks.com</a>
<b>Virginia Department of Transportation</b>		
<b>Ben Mannell</b>	TMPD Assist. Division Administrator	<a href="mailto:ben.mannell@vdot.virginia.gov">ben.mannell@vdot.virginia.gov</a>
<b>City of Richmond</b>		
<b>Maritza Pechin</b>	PDR-OED Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:maritza.pechin@rva.gov">maritza.pechin@rva.gov</a>
<b>Yessenia Revilla</b>	PDR-OED Planner	<a href="mailto:yessenia.revilla@rva.gov">yessenia.revilla@rva.gov</a>
<b>Kelli Rowan</b>	Program Manger	<a href="mailto:kelli.rowan@rva.gov">kelli.rowan@rva.gov</a>
<b>Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP</b>		
<b>Caleb Parks</b>	Project Manager	<a href="mailto:cparks@wrallp.com">cparks@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Lakiaya Aponte</b>	Environmental Planner	<a href="mailto:laponte@wrallp.com">laponte@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Emily Cummings</b>	Environmental Planner	<a href="mailto:ecummings@wrallp.com">ecummings@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Ebony Walden Consulting/Storefront for Community Design</b>		
<b>Ebony Walden</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:ebony@ebonywalden.com">ebony@ebonywalden.com</a>
<b>Land Planning and Design Associates (LPDA)</b>		
<b>Tristan Cleveland</b>	Project Design	<a href="mailto:tristan@lpda.net">tristan@lpda.net</a>
<b>OnPoint Transportation Public Relations</b>		
<b>Mike Carosi</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:mike@communicateonpoint.com">mike@communicateonpoint.com</a>
<b>Windy Campbell</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com">Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com</a>

*Note: A list of additional attendees is enclosed with this meeting summary*

## 1. Introductions/Roll Call

- Overview of Meeting Orientation/Ground Rules and Agenda was given to Panelists and Attendees to start the meeting off.
- Re- Introduction of study team was given,
- Roll Call of Steering Committee attendance was recorded.

## 2. Overview of Study Process

- Review Vision Statement
- What we heard from Community Visioning process
  - “Keeping black history alive”
  - “Fade the freeway from the foreground to the background”
  - “Encouraging cultural growth and discovery”

- **Summary of Engineering Considerations & Structural Assessment Areas**

(Caleb Parks): The team has worked to identify what is physically feasible within the project area and any existent constraints. The first restraint is vertical clearance to accommodate the interstate traffic flow. As we start thinking about what we would incorporate, that aspect becomes important in identifying the structural support needed. The second super important consideration is that we maintain adequate horizontal clearance needed to accommodate future improvements

(Caleb Parks): As it relates to the super structure, most of the engineering considerations are informed by the weight and the load of what we’re carrying, with a focus on ensuring that the areas we use are structurally feasible to hold the amenities and elements that have been included in this project.

- Open space
- Vehicular/human traffic

(Caleb Parks): Generally, what we follow is based off the weight and the structural possibilities. The project area is located between Chamberlayne Avenue and First Street Bridge, and the study found where a feasible connection area could be located in Jackson Ward.

(Caleb Parks): One thing in our evaluation with grade differences is there has only been one spot where the grade difference is not significant, and within that area could be roadway connection on St James Street. Our ability to transition from one side of the interstate to the other gets more challenging, so it must include vertical separation. We’re pretty constrained grade wise within the middle of our project area, but we do believe it would be feasible to create some type of vertical transition within those spaces. Now further to the left there is not the ability to have vehicular traffic, but the St Peter Street connection could be created. The yellow lines show the actual bridge connections. On the other side, there is the opportunity for heavier buildings, new buildings, new construction, etc. This is something we’re discussing and trying to figure out. The project is just under 6 acres in total, but we may have to look at the implementation of this project into phases.

- Summary of Community Meeting:
  - A summary of the April 28<sup>th</sup> community meeting which included:
    - Attendance of about 50 people

- Attendees included a mix of people who had attended before as well as new attendees.
- A Midway report:
  - Reconfirm the vision and what people think.
  - Present different options for connections and grade/constraints.
  - Provide community members the opportunity to walk through project aspects with the study team and ask questions about the project.
- The purpose of this meeting:
  - Educate audiences on the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study: its purpose, process, and desired outcomes.
  - Share results of community feedback from the study's "Community Visioning" phase.
  - Engage the community on conceptual options to "reconnect" the north and south portions of Jackson Ward.
  - Request initial feedback on potential amenities as well as identify interested participants for focus groups to advance the design process.
- Results of Community Meeting #2: The biggest take away from this meeting out was the need for history, arts, and culture to exist no matter what.
- Summary of the Focus Groups:
  - A summary of the May 25-26 focus group meeting which included:
    - Attendance of a variety of different stakeholders – 6<sup>th</sup> Mount Zion, Gilpin, business owners.
    - Introductions included: Tell the study team in 1-2 words what reconnecting Jackson Ward means to you?
    - Review of Study Scope and Vision.
    - Break Out Sessions: Design Charette
      - 4 – 6 participants with design facilitator at each table
      - Desired result: Bubble diagrams and concepts identified by community.
    - Open Group Discussion: Review Designs
      - Present Design Ideas and Concepts
      - Identify Trends, Similarities, and Unique Ideas that they would like to be included in the different themes and amenities.
- Purpose of the Meeting:
  - Collect input from residents and stakeholders to identify components of the reconnecting Jackson Ward effort that can demonstrate and promote a positive impact on the community.
  - Engage these residents and stakeholders in discussions about what it means to reconnect Jackson Ward, to meet the ideals of inclusion, unification, and access to everyone while "keeping black history alive".
  - Request feedback on prospective facilities and a conceptual alternative for displaying what history, arts, and culture mean to Jackson Ward residents in a way that is both practical and appropriate for the neighborhood.
- Results from the Focus Groups:
  - The main theme was about the importance of mixed-use spaces that allow for commercial and housing opportunities to stimulate economic growth and development.

- Additional theme of ensuring that history, arts, and culture are included in all aspects of the project.
- There was an emphasis on breaking the sight up and making it reflective of the themes in Jackson ward. Recommendations were also given for naming of the site and included:
  - Right area = The Harlem of the South
  - Center area = A contemplative, reconciliation space identified as Apostle Town
  - Left area = Commerce space that was reflective of the business of Jackson Ward
- The four main themes that came out in discussion were centered around the ideas of building on the foundation of Black excellence, inclusiveness, and future connections.
  - Youth engagement
  - Marketplace & Innovation
  - Art & Entertainment
  - Faith & Contemplative

(Ebony Walden): History should be reflected throughout this entire design, but it should also serve as a link to the contemporary Jackson Ward and our goals for future prosperity. We truly want this area to be a community place that is accessible to everyone and connects the north and south sides of Jackson Ward and Richmond. It should represent the rich Black history that Richmond has to offer. Black history must be relatable, accessible, and readily available. Not simply having a space but having a real community hub where Black businesses and trades can be highlighted.

(Ebony Walden): But I will say this as one last thought: this is only a framework, and the actual design work will be completed in the following stage. The broad themes that you can currently see are those that we found and intend to employ going forward to direct the project.

### 3. Questions and Answers

*Time was given before moving forward with presenting potential framework plan for answer and questions. Here is what was gathered:*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): One important theme that was discussed in conversation was the inclusion of housing (Noted from previous discussion on what could possibly go in the space). If we don't include that and have that as a project theme, then it has the possibility to be forgotten. It should be a part of this process; mixed-use development could support this.

**A** (Caleb Parks): *Thank you Jerome, that is something we are taking into account. However, there is a larger redevelopment in Jackson Ward; that study will address the housing concern.*

*(Maritza Pechin): Just to be clear you believe that one of the houses that is adjacent to this project should be for housing?*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): We identified areas outside of the project area that could be used for mixed use development.

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *So, I think the program of the buildings is something that we can add as a potential and include mixed use spaces.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): I really think you need to include mixed use, people in Jackson Ward didn't lose parks they lost their houses. As we make this reconnection, we need to look at this and

how we can rectify how things transpired. I also think the themes identified should include housing in marketplace & innovation.

*A (Maritiza Pechin): We are a little bit constrained on how many buildings and where they can go. I think that point is very well taken which is why we want to show you this preview before we move it to the next step and present it to the public.*

**Q** (Janis Allen): Jerome really landed on where I was going. I think Anedra's letter was very important and we need to include Anedra's input.

*A (Ebony Walden): This works like a hole in a larger project. This is a project that is existent within the frame of a bigger project and is working in conjunction with the greater Community Plan.*

#### **4. Review of Design Framework Plan**

*At this stage, a framework introduction was given, followed by a review of the framework plan and project theme diagrams that were developed in response to feedback from the public in order to take into account what people desire from structures that are remembered and connected to the location.*

(Tristan Cleveland): As much as we can, the old street layout is being restored. We also heard is that circulation needs to be approved both in and around Jackson Ward. More walking paths, biking, and connection with other areas are key to include in the project design. The next area was the marketplace and innovation space, and this space is very important. There needs to be opportunities for the development of buildings and commercial spaces on the site. So, first we are creating this marketplace framework and then establishing what could potentially be put in place there. The next layer we look at is history, arts, and culture which will exist throughout the space, as well as creating space for future programming and sites focused on history, arts, and culture. There could be a circulation history walk that guides people through the history of Jackson Ward, but there are areas throughout the sight available for this theme. This area, as well as districts of marketplace innovation and neighborhood housing, will include programmatic elements such as Farmers markets, community gardens, or other community development elements.

(Tristan Cleveland): This layer we heard that people want more space, shade, and areas where they can go for development, as well as opportunities for entertainment and relaxation. This space should be very activated, to ensure that this is a safe space that is supposed to be used for the community. These spaces are flexible with the programming, but it needs to be a space that people want to come to. Remember that this is a framework plan and is not stuck but is a general plan to guide development and implementation. The intention is that these spaces should be layered to be active, useful spaces for residents and visitors. The themes and amenities are consistent with focus group feedback, and we'll be working with the City to identify where we lay these themes out. The themes can be incorporated anywhere throughout the space.

(Tristan Cleveland): One focus group had a really unique idea of names for the spaces. We've identified near 6<sup>th</sup> Mount Zion Church of more contemplative and faith spaces in this section. On St James Street we've identified a vehicular connection that connects the two sides. To the east, adjacent to first street, we identified primary elements of themes of arts and culture.

**5. Questions and Answers** – Time was given before moving forward with presenting potential framework plan for answer and questions. Here is what was gathered:

**Q** (David Lambert): What capacity does the Harlem of the South have to actually draw people to the area? Is it physically big enough to allow for bringing the people that should be brought in.

**A** (Caleb Parks) *The project team identified the feasible developable areas within the project location, with respect given to what programmatic elements and design features could be included. The space itself covers roughly almost 6 acres, which provides a significant amount of space for people to visit and come to the space.*

**Q** (Janis Allen): Really put emphasis on the 2<sup>nd</sup> street corridor, 2<sup>nd</sup> street used to be referred to as the deuce and I think it's important to include those.

**A** (Maritza Pechin): *I agree Janis, but unfortunately some of that stuff is what needs to be pulled into the Jackson Ward Community Plan. And one important location is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Duval turn, so that it is a lot better. People need to want to travel down 2<sup>nd</sup> street.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): My suggestion as far as naming what you have done so far, it pretty much looks like you're doing a comparison of black neighborhoods in America. Let's find something that speaks to what Jackson Ward was, not just naming black neighborhoods after a prosperous white neighborhood. See if we can't find something that speaks to the different districts that existed in Jackson Ward.

**A** (Ebony Walden): *There are not set in stone, but purely thematic, but noted – good perspective.*

**A** (Caleb Parks): *I appreciate that Jerome, we should draw attention to what made Jackson Ward what it was.*

**Q** (Jerome Legions): Caleb I have one other question and I guess it is the preservation of this district, how will that be handled? If its city owned, then that's one thing, but if its publicly owned then people could destroy it. What is ownership of the site to ensure protection?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *What we've identified as the project area is within the Right-of-Way for the State of VA. Some spaces outside are included, but these specifics are something that are considered along the way. The city is working on this project with VDOT and OIPI, so there is an interest in pursuing this project.*

*(Maritza Pechin): Historic preservation laws relate to old places, so I don't think we could include this, I'd have to do more research. But I hear what you're saying, to go through all this and have someone come in and destroy it would be horrible. There is an ordinance Katherine Jordan proposed to extend the city's old and historic districts.*

**Q** (Jim Hill): I love the shade canopy trees on the flat lid over the highway but I'm skeptical we can deliver on that with only 5' depth, how are those feasible?

**A** (Caleb Parks): *There are some projects throughout the country with innovative design themes.*

**Q** (Jim Hill): It would be a lot more interesting to be in there if it were a curving path rather than just a flat, straight area. It also would be interesting to see rise and falls of level within the flat development, maybe seeing this within the walking trail.

**A** (Tristan Cleveland): *As Caleb said we're able to put the soil into the girders, so then additional things will be added so that it is as accessible as possible.*

*(Caleb Parks): We do have another view of what this framework could look like. Specifics will be done as the project continues, but this is the overall general framework plan.*

**Q** (Jim Hill): Will public restrooms be provided?

**A** *(Caleb Parks): That's a good question. I think those specific features are things that need to be worked out, but we are showing the opportunity for adjacent structures to incorporate the public restrooms and shade structures.*

**Q** (Janis Allen): I know you had a meeting with 6<sup>th</sup> Mt Zion, is there anything that could be shared with the steering committee?

**A** *(Maritza Pechin): I, Caleb, Yessenia, and Tristan were there. Pastor Nelson knew of the plan, and they were all generally receptive to it, but had the same concerns as you all do in terms of what consequences and effects this could have on the outer community. That's an important consideration that we want to keep in mind as we continue with the project. We decided to do a meeting in July with the leadership of the church, and they are looking forward to having more specifics for them. One thing they mentioned is a lot of them don't live in the community, they are an important voice, but they are not the most important voices. I responded with just because they don't live here doesn't mean they don't trace their history to Jackson Ward.*

(Jim Hill) This will need noise attention/analysis.

**Q** (Jerome Legions): Will this go through the Special use Permit process?

**A** *(Maritza Pechin): No because its public right of way. It will probably go through the Urban Design Committee (UDC), its still being decided if the state or the city is going to be responsible for building. If it's the city, it would have to go through the UDC but state it would not.*

*(Caleb Parks): One to identify that we do have the opportunities for connecting the above space with the highway below to ensure that it meets VDOT design requirements.*

*(Maritza Pechin): We can't create a tunnel because the cost is raised more than VDOT wants because of safety considerations.*

## **6. Potential Phasing for Framework Plan:**

*At this stage, potential phasing considerations were provided to the community.*

(Caleb Parks): It's a fairly large undertaking that could occupy up to six acres of newly created space. As we look to identify funding and the project, we're looking at ways that we could phase the plan.

(Caleb Parks): The first phase would reestablish the connection of St. James Street across the highway. The design could point to some of the thematic elements of the connection that include:

- | <b>Phase 1A</b>   | <b>Phase 1B</b>  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes</li> <li>• 10' Shared-Use Path</li> <li>• 5' Sidewalks</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes</li> <li>• Shared-Use Paths</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Amenities</li> <li>• Building/Commerce Space</li> <li>• Event Space</li> </ul> |

(Caleb Parks): As a second phase, we could look to implement the larger open space area where there is the potential for new development and event space. We're looking at this area adjacent to first street because it is the most feasible. Elements include:

**Phase 2**

- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space

**Phase 2**

- Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space

(Caleb Parks): The third phase would be incorporating the area adjacent to Chamberlayne Ave, part of that is related to cost as well as the current and planned projects that will occur in that area. It would be the final phase and would cover the middle section. Elements include:

**Phase 3**

- Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space

(Maritza Pechin): Just to clarify, the reason we're discussing phasing is cause funding comes from a limited amount and could make it difficult to be able to complete this project all at once. Federal money gives money to Transportation Planning Organizations, and they have a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that they use to allocate money. We have submitted a request to include the RJW project in the LRTP. It looks like this will be favorable, but they don't vote until July, so we don't know yet.

(Maritza Pechin): The Federal government has allocated \$1B to be dispersed over 5 years. The first amount to be dispersed is approx. \$200M. We want a project that will be competitive to achieve the funding. You have to match it, with the requirement that 20% must be funded by local-regional-state sources, and the money must be spent within 5 years. So, we're thinking about breaking it into smaller pieces to fund over different years.

**A** (Yessenia Revilla): (Posted in Chat) The RRTPO is in person at:  
 PlanRVA  
 9211 Forest Hill Avenue  
 Richmond, VA 23235  
 July 7 @ 9:30am

For support you can send in written public comments before the meeting to Janice Firestone ([jfirestone@planrva.org](mailto:jfirestone@planrva.org)) and Chet Parsons ([CParsons@planrva.org](mailto:CParsons@planrva.org)) and ask for your comments to be read at the meeting as public comments for agenda item: ConnectRVA 2045 Amendments.

## 7. Recommendations and Next Steps

*It is here where we discussed Key Considerations for the feasibility including topics of Anti-Gentrification.*

(Ebony Walden): Both our concern as planners and community concern is how are we going to address gentrification in this project? Because we have another planning process adjacent, we are going to recommend policy and program recommendations that the Jackson Ward Community Plan could implement. How do we embed them into the community and into the larger community plan?

(Ebony Walden): We are recommending under the community plan housing plan and analysis. We need to look at the current state of housing and what exists currently, and how policy could be used to change that. We need to actively look at the situation and decide where things need to be. In addition, we are recommending a small business preservation plan and how to incorporate and ensure protection of small businesses and more specifically Black-owned businesses. There are already several arts, culture, and history institutions in the area but this project has the opportunity to bring those together and tell the whole story.

**Q** (Janis Allen): I hear soundbites that I want to include here – affordable home ownership and mixed income housing. We need to emphasize the ownership of housing not just affordable housing, and not just separate housing by income, actually allow mixed income buildings. I need the words we're saying to actually match what is on the screen.

**A** (Ebony Walden): *The Jackson Ward Community Plan should explore what would be the right numbers, the right income levels, and what are affordable rentals and affordable home ownership.*

(Jerome Legions): You're spot on. We have got to make sure that we are not setting people up for purchasing houses and then renting them out. We've had that before and we need to ensure that it does not happen again.

(Janis Allen): Re-phrase the messaging "Engage a black design professional" to state "Engage a professional experienced in designing black spaces."

## 8. Next Steps and Next Meeting

- Study team will take the feedback from this meeting and alter presentation as it relates, for the upcoming preparation of community event #3 at the Hippodrome, June 29, 2022, 6-8 pm.
- Please attend; tell your friends to attend.
- Final Note: We will look to re-engage with the Steering Committee as we get notice of funding opportunities and are pulling together grant applications.

## 9. Questions and Answers

For the sake of time, this set of Q & A was limited.

## 10. Adjourn

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:**

*The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and anyone interested in attending are permitted to register for the meeting. The list below represents additional attendees present at the meeting.*

Name	Email
<b>Samantha Lewis</b>	<a href="mailto:Samantha.lewis@acom.com">Samantha.lewis@acom.com</a>
<b>RRHA RECD</b>	<a href="mailto:info@rrha.com">info@rrha.com</a>
<b>Court Caldwell</b>	<a href="mailto:ccaldwell@vcu.edu">ccaldwell@vcu.edu</a>



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# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Steering Committee Meeting #6  
September 8, 2022*



# MEETING SUMMARY

**Date:** Thursday, September 8, 2022

**Time of Meeting:** 4:00 – 5:30 PM

**Subject:** Steering Committee Meeting #6

**Project:** Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study

**Project UPC:** 114874

**Contract Number:** 49401-009

## MEETING ATTENDEES:

Name	Affiliation/Role	Email
<b>Reconnect Jackson Ward Steering Committee</b>		
<b>Anedra Bourne</b>	Venture Richmond	<a href="mailto:abourne@venturerichmond.com">abourne@venturerichmond.com</a>
<b>Charlene Pitchford</b>	Gilpin Court Tenants Council	<a href="mailto:crprhateenantcommissioner@gmail.com">crprhateenantcommissioner@gmail.com</a>
<b>David Lambert</b>	Eye Que Optical	<a href="mailto:eyequeoptical@gmail.com">eyequeoptical@gmail.com</a>
<b>Donte McCutchen</b>	Moriah Baptist Church	<a href="mailto:donte.mccutchen@gmail.com">donte.mccutchen@gmail.com</a>
<b>Janis Allen</b>	Historic Jackson Ward Civic Association	<a href="mailto:janisaa55@yahoo.com">janisaa55@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Jerome Legions</b>	Carver Area Civic League	<a href="mailto:jeromelegions1@gmail.com">jeromelegions1@gmail.com</a>
<b>Leighton Powell</b>	Community Member	<a href="mailto:leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org">leighton.powell@scenicvirginia.org</a>
<b>Nate Goodenow</b>	Walter Parks	<a href="mailto:nate@wparks.com">nate@wparks.com</a>
<b>Office of the Secretary of Transportation – Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment</b>		
<b>Ronique Day</b>	Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:ronique.day@oipi.virginia.gov">ronique.day@oipi.virginia.gov</a>
<b>City of Richmond</b>		
<b>Maritza Pechin</b>	PDR-OED Deputy Director	<a href="mailto:maritza.pechin@rva.gov">maritza.pechin@rva.gov</a>
<b>Dironna Clarke</b>	DPW-OETM Administrator	<a href="mailto:dironna.clarke@rva.gov">dironna.clarke@rva.gov</a>
<b>Yessenia Revilla</b>	PDR-OED Planner	<a href="mailto:yessenia.revilla@rva.gov">yessenia.revilla@rva.gov</a>
<b>Kelli Rowan</b>	Program Manger	<a href="mailto:kelli.rowan@rva.gov">kelli.rowan@rva.gov</a>
<b>Whitman, Requardt and Associates, LLP</b>		
<b>Caleb Parks</b>	Project Manager	<a href="mailto:cparks@wrallp.com">cparks@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Emily Cummings</b>	Planner	<a href="mailto:ecummings@wrallp.com">ecummings@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Kim Glinkin</b>	Planner	<a href="mailto:kglinkin@wrallp.com">kglinkin@wrallp.com</a>
<b>Ebony Walden Consulting/Storefront for Community Design</b>		
<b>Ebony Walden</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:ebony@ebonywalden.com">ebony@ebonywalden.com</a>
<b>Shawn Balon</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:shawn@storefrontrichmond.org">shawn@storefrontrichmond.org</a>
<b>Land Planning and Design Associates (LPDA)</b>		
<b>Tristan Cleveland</b>	Project Design	<a href="mailto:tristan@lpda.net">tristan@lpda.net</a>
<b>OnPoint Transportation Public Relations</b>		
<b>Mike Carosi</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:mike@communicateonpoint.com">mike@communicateonpoint.com</a>
<b>Windy Campbell</b>	Community Engagement and Coordination	<a href="mailto:Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com">Windy.campbell@communicateonpoint.com</a>

*Note: A list of additional attendees is enclosed with this meeting summary*

## 1. Introductions/Roll Call

- Overview of Agenda, Ground Rules, and Introduction
  - Project Partners
  - Study Team
  - Steering Committee

## 2. Review of Community Event #3

- Summary of Community Event which included:
  - 29 Attendees
  - Attendance of a variety of different stakeholders: Community members, city folks, city councilor, steering committee, and descendants
  - Interactive Stations:
    - Jackson Ward Historic Neighborhood Map
      - 1924 Jackson Ward Neighborhood Street Grid
    - Potential Framework Plan
      - Potential Land Use Areas, Connections, and Theme Areas
    - Potential Framework Plan Layers – Exploded Axonometric Drawing
      - Potential Theme Areas, Circulation, and Historic Development
    - Potential Framework Plan Sections – Representative Sections
      - Potential Development Areas and Elevation Relationship to the Surroundings
    - Project Next Steps
- Purpose of Community Event #3:
  - Share a recommended framework to reconnect the north and south portions of Jackson Ward and seek community input that will influence a recommended design as the project advances.
  - Communicate next steps the Study Team will take to develop a final report that will include the recommended design framework for reconnecting Jackson Ward, which the City will use in applications for future funding opportunities to make this reconnection a reality.
  - Review and discuss suggested policy and program recommendations for inclusion in the Jackson Ward Community Plan. These are related to preserving and elevating Jackson Ward’s culture and history, expanding small businesses, and preserving affordable housing.
- Summary of Discussion and Findings:
  - Continued request to address reparations for past harms – what it could look like, should look like, or will look like.
  - Excitement about the idea to have mixed use and affordable housing opportunities and commercial opportunities that support and promote black success.
  - Importance of additional considerations for project development outside of traditional engineering and physical development considerations.

### 3. Overview of Feasibility Study

- Review Vision Statement:
  - Prepared by the community and stakeholder group to summarize the key ideas and themes for the project and what needs to be the overall focus of the project.
  - Three major themes of “Keep black history alive, fade the freeway from the foreground to the background, and encourage cultural growth and discovery.”
  
- Review Feasibility Study Process
  - Why Reconnect:
    - The Reconnect Jackson Ward project presents an important opportunity to identify the potential for reconnecting the two sides of Jackson Ward through the creation of new developments, transportation connections, and public spaces.
    - The opportunity to reconnect gives an opportunity to specifically repair and patch the disconnection between two communities.
    - The project is also incredibly important in telling the history and story of Jackson Ward and the impact the community had on Richmond and black communities in general.
  - Guided by Community Engagement:
    - Three community events held to present project updates and provide an opportunity to give feedback on project elements.
    - Two pop up events in Jackson Ward and Gilpin Court to directly interact with the community and increase awareness and exposure of the Reconnect Jackson Ward project and process with those who will directly be affected.
    - Four focus groups held to guide the proposed design – participants worked to identify design and thematic elements that represented history, arts, and culture.
    - One on one interviews to talk directly to descendants of displaced residents and current Jackson Ward residents to learn their stories and understand their history.
  
- Summary of Feasibility Study Findings
  - What We Heard:
    - Gentrification and displacement: If the appropriate controls are not put in place, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project and redevelopment of Gilpin Court can provide additional market pressure that would aid in advancing existing gentrification and displacement.
    - Reparations: the need for the Reconnect project to address past harms against African Americans that were displaced by the highway project that bifurcated the Jackson Ward community.
    - Mixed-use: Prioritize Black wealth creation by creating home, business, and land ownership opportunities. Reestablish the historic neighborhood and create opportunities for marketplaces, commerce, and innovation.
    - History, arts, and culture: Integrate arts and entertainment spaces that celebrate the history and culture of Jackson Ward and provide a space for community events and entertainment.
    - Cost and matching: Given the complexities of implementing a new structure within the constrained urban project location, the cost of the undertaking is anticipated to be substantial.

- Overall, the community expressed one major common theme - the project to reconnect Jackson Ward must elevate and expand Black ownership, history, and culture in Jackson Ward. As this project continues to advance from the feasibility study phase, planners and engineers should work to address the concerns listed above through design, policy interventions, programming, and funding.
  - Feasibility
    - Required engineering considerations for project development:
      - Maintain vertical and horizontal clearance
      - Accommodate structural loads
    - Rough Order of Magnitude Cost Analysis
    - Summary of Potential Phasing Plans: Small Connection A, Small Connection B, Medium Connection, Large Connection
  - Findings & Recommendations
    - Additional studies and analyses
      - Conduct traffic analysis and impact study
      - Determine environmental impacts and prepare environmental review to ensure compliance for use of Federal funding
    - Reparations, displacement, and gentrification considerations
    - Preliminary engineering and design
      - Utilizing designers with experience designing Black spaces
    - Local History and Culture Archival Research
    - Philanthropic Coordination
    - Continued Community Engagement

#### 4. Questions and Answers:

*Time was given before moving forward with presenting potential framework plan for answer and questions. Here is what was gathered:*

(Maritza Pechin) I wanted to make sure you are aware that the recommendations around reparations and gentrification are located in the appendix

- This information was included in the appendix as the study was meant to just assess the infrastructure feasibility of the project
- Many of these recommendations and research will be utilized throughout the Jackson Ward Community Plan and the Small Area Plan
- If we end up doing a capping project how to set ourselves up for that
- Federal government has kind of dropped out, but there are state and local efforts that are occurring across the United States
- Most of the time reparations starts with a study or task force to identify

**Q** (Anedra Bourne) Just to be clear, you won't see this before the appendix? It will be nowhere throughout the study to read that before you reach the end

**A** (Maritza Pechin) *Sometimes things move around. We have an executive summary that needs to be updated and added to include*

*(Anedra Bourne) The conversations around gentrification and reparations, not just low-income housing or reframing RRHA areas, has to be worded in a way that is not lost and properly shows the emphasis of a major concern.*

(Janis Allen) You called out the walkability rate but the most important of the community factors was the poverty rate and renter rate, those truly show the differences of the two sides and a more accurate telling of the situation in Gilpin Court. The graphics make it very obvious about the race of the two sides and the differences between.

**Q** (Jerome Legions) When I hear about the feasibility study, I hear economic development and arts and entertainment, has weight been given to one of those? Ensure that it isn't an entertainment venue but actually focuses on growth and development.

**A** (Maritza Pechin) *Am I understanding that you want it to be businesses that can succeed and not just cultural nonprofits*

(Jerome Legions) Yes there needs to be an emphasis on growth and development.

**A** (Maritza Pechin) *The mixed-use areas will focus on housing and commercial opportunities for the people of Jackson Ward*

(Maritza Pechin) I'm happy to get printed comments I can arrange picking them up

- *Email comments written down*
- *Form on the website, available for that*
- *Also, happy to print out a hard copy and provide that for you*

**Q** (Anedra Bourne) Have there been any major concerns with capping or reconnecting?

**A** (Maritza Pechin) *One of the big concerns is cost and the cost matching requirement of it.*

- *Significant cost for building the park, does not even include the amenities atop the park\**
- *One of the things I've been concerned about is that the idea that the cap is the only option. Could be a different type of connection that reconnects the community and costs a lot less but still provides a development. The money saved could be used to fund other priorities.*
- *As we move into the next stage of planning, we can communicate with the community about how to achieve what we need without breaking the bank*

**Q** (Janis Allen) Is this money only for something new? We have many other issues that should be prioritized ahead of a capping project

**A** (Maritza Pechin) *Money earmarked for this purpose, not for other purposes*

*\*Structural unit costs represent a unit-based per square footage cost of anticipated loading and general project elements, calculated based on the total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64. Separate footage structural costs were established for anticipated roadway and pedestrian bridge connections as well as park/open space.*

## 5. Review of Grant Application Process

- Summary of Grant Application Process
  - Reconnecting Communities Pilot Discretionary Grant Program
  - Planning Grant Specifics and Requirements
    - Maximum Grant Award of \$2 million
    - Application Due: October 13, 2022
  - Eligible Planning Activities under Planning Grant

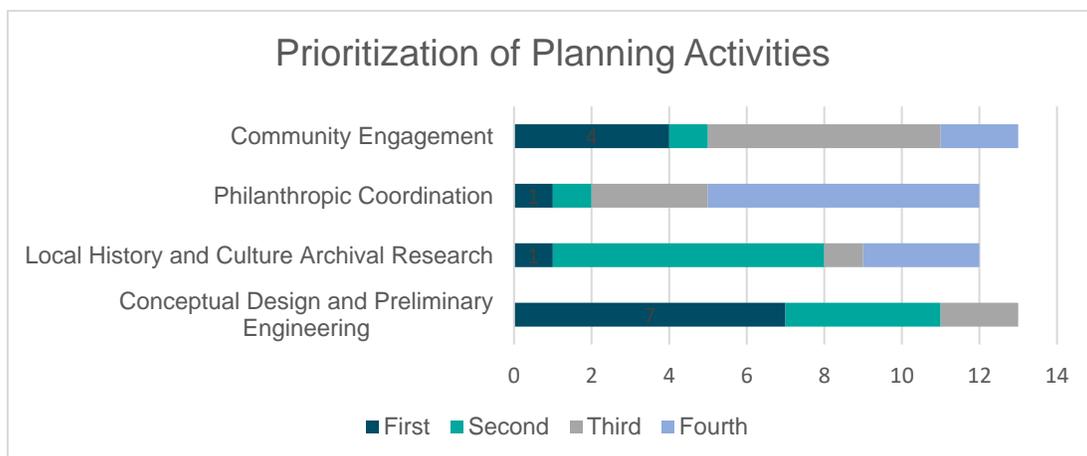
- Planning studies of current traffic patterns and the surrounding street network, transportation network capacity, alternative roadway designs, impacts to the mobility and safety of people and freight, cost, and anticipated economic and environmental impacts.
  - Public engagement activities to provide the public opportunities to provide input into a plan to remove and convert an eligible facility.
  - Conceptual and preliminary engineering, or design and planning studies that support the environmental review for a construction project
  - Any other necessary planning activities as put forth by the applicant that do not result in construction.
- Overview of Grant Considerations & Merit Criteria
    - Equity, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement - Analysis, from community engagement and research, of historical and current conditions: socioeconomic, access to amenities, needs of community, and environmental conditions.
    - Mobility and Community Connectivity - Feasibility studies showing the need for increased connectivity to things like jobs, healthcare, housing, grocery stores, worship, recreation, etc.; Integration with the history and context of the surrounding area, with environmental and social considerations taken into account.
    - Community-based Stewardship, Management, and Partnerships - Community-centered approach to identify a solution that addresses the displacement and disadvantages faced by the community. Development of a community advisory group or board, or other place-based management org to oversee the community involvement aspect of the project. Formal partnerships with community-based orgs, institutions, or government.
    - Equitable Development and Shared Prosperity - Comprehensive plan or framework that outlines the community vision and priorities and addresses the steps needed to achieve that vision and priorities. Focuses on community restoration, stabilization, and anti-displacement strategies, entrepreneurship, and development.

## 6. Next Steps and Recommendations

- Next Steps
  - City Council Resolution - The Richmond City Council has plans to propose a resolution in the September 26 City Council meeting for the purpose of officially committing to the match requirements of the RCP grant. Under the RCP Grant Program, the city would be responsible for a cost match of up to \$200,000. This resolution will be an official commitment of the city to match any funding that is approved.
  - Requesting Letters of Endorsement - In preparation for the grant application, the city and study team have solicited letters of endorsement from community members and stakeholders. These letters help to provide credibility and support to the overall project and signifies the projects potential. We have reached out to many important community members and figures across Richmond and are waiting to receive letters of endorsement from those people in order to advance the grant application.
  - Preparing Grant Application Narrative - In submitting the grant application, a project narrative is required to make the case for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project to receive funding. The narrative will include an overview of the project area and location, the purpose and of the proposed project, the project's readiness for implementation and development, and how the project addresses each of the merit criteria.

- Steering Committee Review – Participation from the Steering Committee is requested to review draft Study Report and provide feedback and comments. Additionally, the Steering Committee is requested to review the Narrative section of the Planning Grant Application to provide feedback and comments.
- Grant Application Due October 13, 2022
- Recommended Future Planning Activities
  - Additional studies and analyses will be necessary to continue to assess the existing conditions within the project area as well as any potential impacts of implementing the proposed project.
  - Preliminary Engineering and Design: Further engineering and design will be necessary to identify all of the civil, mechanical, and architectural components associated with a new bridge or lid spanning the interstate. These efforts would also inform the refinement of cost estimates and schedules. Supporting the engineering and design, it would be beneficial to develop a preferred concept site plan that could be adopted by local and regional governments as a long-term goal for the area, consistent with the *Richmond 300* Master Plan as well as other local and regional planning documents
  - Local History and Archival Research: Community engagement and outreach activities will continue to be a critical component of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project, not only to maintain and continue to generate invested public interest in the project, but also to meet the requirements of the NEPA process as well as other state and local design approval requirements
  - Philanthropic Coordination: Further coordination will be necessary for the identification of community sponsors and partners for the development of a foundation or organization which will be tasked with leading, guiding, and fundraising through the construction phase, subsequent programs and partnerships, and the maintenance of the project site.
  - Continued Community Engagement: Community engagement and outreach activities will continue to be a critical component of the Reconnect Jackson Ward Project, not only to maintain and continue to generate invested public interest in the project, but also to meet the requirements of the NEPA process as well as other state and local design approval requirements

**Digital Poll Question #1:** Please rank in order the proposed planning activities that you think should be prioritized if the project is awarded grant funding:



## 7. Questions and Answers:

*Time was given before moving forward with presenting potential framework plan for answer and questions. Here is what was gathered:*

**Q** (Anedra Bourne) What does this mean for us long term? Is this going to be a 5-year process, 10 years?

- **A** (Maritza Pechin) *In our country whenever you spend federal money there is a lot of oversight. Another piece not on this list is using planning money for environmental and traffic analyses that are required for advancing any project. Once we are awarded grant money it won't change through administrations.*

**Q** (Janis Allen) The slide says 2029 about construction and implementation

- **A** (Caleb Parks) *Construction is more contingent on other factors and hard to know right now. This date may need to be notated.*
- **A** (Maritza Pechin) *It'll depend on the scale of the potential changes and how detailed they are and what all they encompass.*

**Q** (Janis Allen) What is your take on how the steering committee process worked?

- **A** (Maritza Pechin) *I think there are always things that come up in a planning process that are not scoped for us to do.*
  - *We are really happy that people brought up the issues of gentrification, reparations, etc. and I hope people understand I don't have all the answers. We need to figure out how to address those things in a separate effort.*
  - *Appreciate the group was helpful, open, and shared opinions*
  - *One of the challenges has been the excessive planning that has occurred in this area, and there is a level of fatigue within the community*
- **A** (Ebony Walden) *Planning processes are always challenging because you are getting excited about something that may not happen*
  - *You guys have lit the fire under us*
  - *The process has been challenging in the sense that it's a good thing that's being proposed but it is maybe not the best thing to heal the wounds that exist in the community.*
  - *We need to identify the people who were displaced and figure out a way to provide those people with reparations*
  - *Encouraging but difficult within the limits of bureaucracy*

**Q** (Jerome Legions) Where can we go to share more information about the project. Something like a scratch and sniff that allows people to see it and whet their appetite and give them an opportunity to engage further. How do we introduce this project to social media?

- **A** (Caleb Parks) *As it relates to sharing and outreach, we first wanted to incorporate your feedback around the feasibility study. The current draft is available on the project website*
  - *Once we can take all the drafts off, we have intent to announce it via social media and send things out with the Listserv that has been utilized throughout the feasibility study process*
  - *Leaning on the city to provide social media updates*
  - *We can pull out the executive summary and produce that as well, but we want to make sure to get feedback from you guys first.*

**ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES:**

*The Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study Steering Committee meetings are open to the public and anyone interested in attending are permitted to register for the meeting. The list below represents additional attendees present at the meeting.*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Tavares Floyd</b>	<a href="mailto:tavares.floyd@richmondgov.com">tavares.floyd@richmondgov.com</a>
<b>Samantha Lewis</b>	<a href="mailto:samantha.lewis@aecom.com">samantha.lewis@aecom.com</a>
<b>Jackie Stephens</b>	<a href="mailto:jackie.stephens@richmondgov.com">jackie.stephens@richmondgov.com</a>



# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Community Event #1*  
*March 3, 2022*





# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Community Event #2*  
*April 28, 2022*





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# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Community Event #3  
June 29, 2022*

The Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIP), in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the City of Richmond, is undertaking a feasibility study to develop options to reconnect Jackson Ward, and surrounding neighborhoods, which were physically and economically separated by Interstates 95 and 64 since the 1950s.

The community-driven study process began in January 2022 and public meetings have been held since March 2022, with the most recent meeting conducted on June 29, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Educate audiences about the Reconnect Jackson Ward Feasibility Study: its purpose, process, and desired outcomes.
- Share a recommended framework to reconnect the north and south portions of Jackson Ward and seek community input that will influence a recommended design as the project advances.
- Communicate next steps the Study Team will take to develop a final report that will include the recommended design framework for reconnecting Jackson Ward, which the City will use in applications for future funding opportunities to make this reconnection a reality.
- Review and discuss suggested policy and program recommendations for inclusion in the Jackson Ward Community Plan. These are related to preserving and elevating Jackson Ward's culture and history, expanding small businesses, and preserving affordable housing.

This community meeting included a presentation and question and answer session, followed by an open-house featuring interactive stations staffed by the study team's subject matter experts.

## What We Heard

As part of the Community Event, there was an opportunity for community members to ask questions and provide input to inform the feasibility study process. The following subjects received the greatest attention and will continue to be kept evaluated as the project develops:

- Concerns about potential gentrification, displacement, and reparations for past harms.
- The cost, construction, and completion schedule for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.
- Opportunities for potential funding for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project.
- Support for mixed-use affordable housing opportunities and ongoing plans for redeveloping Gilpin Court.

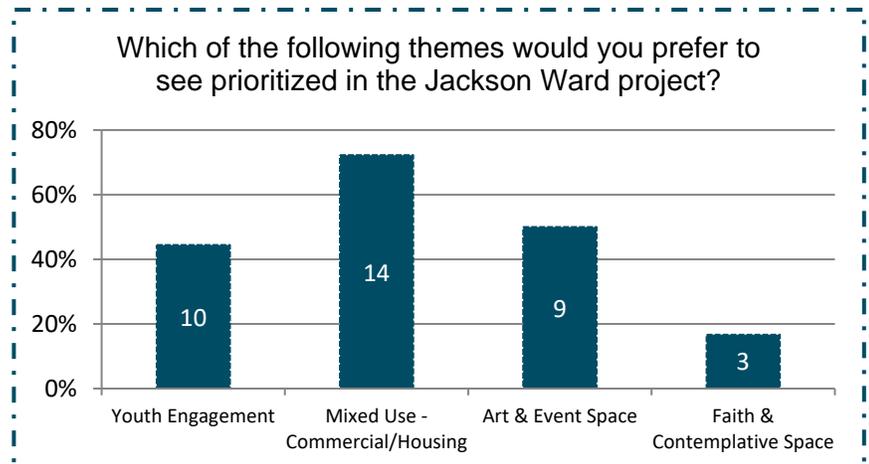


## TOTAL ATTENDEES

Attendees Signed In



A survey accompanied the Community Event and requested input from the public on the design framework as well as the recommended themes to be incorporated into the design.



Note: Survey results reflect 22 total respondents; multiple responses could be provided by a single respondent.

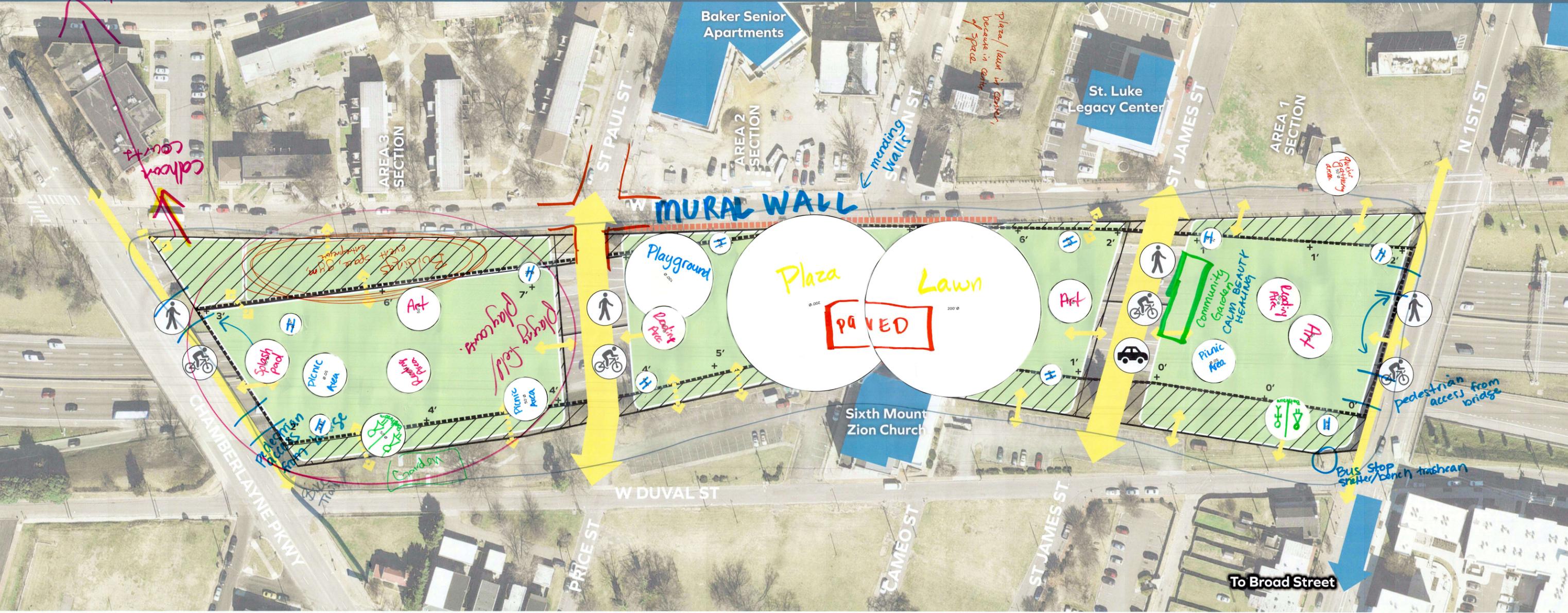


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# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

*Focus Group:  
Potential Design Area Plan Maps  
March 25 and 26, 2022*



**LEGEND**

- Possible Design Area
- Transition Area
- Community Landmarks
- Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
- Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
- Lid/Covered Highway Area
- Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
- Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)

**(H) history** **DRBAM'S**

**FAITH**

*MZ*



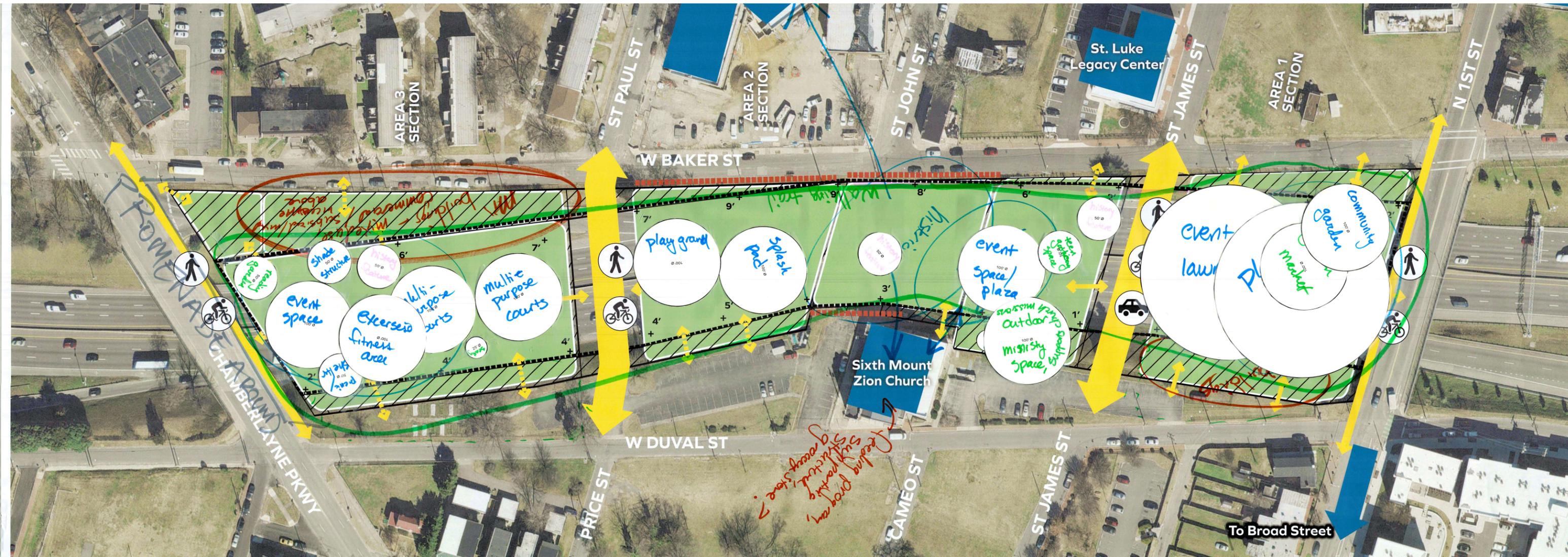
**LEGEND**

- Possible Design Area
- Transition Area
- Community Landmarks
- Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/ or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
- Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
- Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
- Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
- Lid/Covered Highway Area

*Katherine Seaman 5/26/22*

*Daniel Seaman 5/25/22*

*Anthony Wilkins 5/25/22*



- LEGEND**
- Possible Design Area
  - Transition Area
  - Community Landmarks
  - Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/ or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
  - Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
  - Lid/Covered Highway Area
  - Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
  - Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)

4-6 5/26 GROUP 1

*Charlene Pitchford*

*Jerome Legions*

*SEAN DUNCAN*

*RWB IN ZBC*



LEGEND

Stopped Pedestrian Connection

*The From Cap of Conf to Cap of Cap*

*5/26/22  
Doug, Mike, Delores*

*Trees  
lots of trees*

*entrance*

*entrance*

*To Broad Street*

*Theme Arrival*

*Theme Arrival*

*GARWAY*

*urban Ag*

*Outdoor Horticulture*

*Antony Tower Structure*

*Water feature*

*Sixth Mount Zion Church*

*ST JAMES ST*

*W DUVAL ST*

*CHAMBERLAYNE PKWY*

*PRICE ST*

*CAMEO ST*

*ST JAMES ST*

*ST JAMES ST*

*N 1ST ST*

*Baker Senior Apartments*

*St. Luke Legacy Center*

*AREA 3 SECTION*

*AREA 2 SECTION*

*AREA 1 SECTION*

*ST PAUL ST*

*ST JOHN ST*

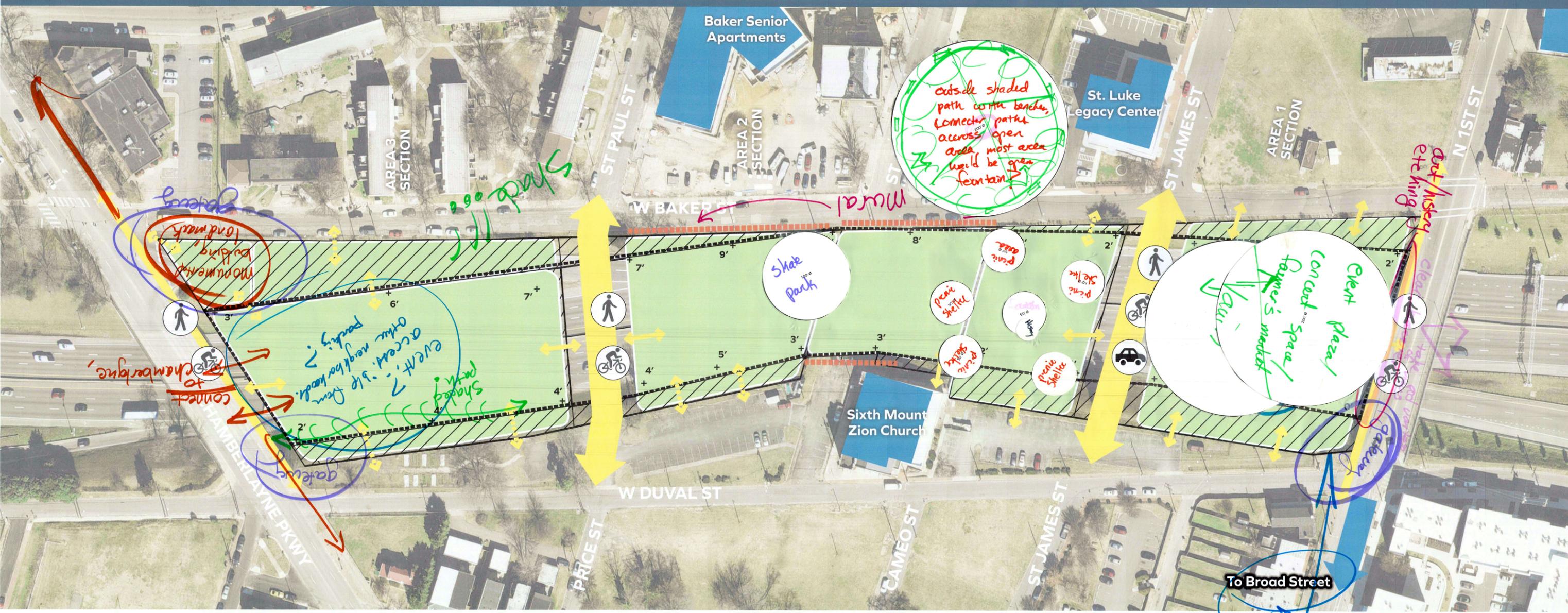
*W BAKER ST*

*W DUVAL ST*

5/26  
6:30-8:30

# POTENTIAL DESIGN AREA PLAN

POTENTIAL LAND USE AREAS, GRADE CONSTRAINTS, AND CONNECTIONS



- LEGEND**
- Possible Design Area
  - Transition Area
  - Community Landmarks
  - Multimodal Connection (vehicle, bike, and/ or pedestrian, as indicated by icon)
  - Pedestrian Connection (at or near grade)
  - Stepped Pedestrian Connection (requires grade transition with steps and ramps)
  - Significant Edge (significant grade elevation change)
  - Lid/Covered Highway Area

*Joni L. Wynn*  
5/26/22

*Thomas Skora*  
5/26/22

To Broad Street  
*retail*



# Appendix B

## *Cost Estimate Ranges*



**RECONNECT JACKSON WARD**

**ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022**

**CONCEPT 1 - LARGE CONNECTION (HIGH ESTIMATE)**

Structural Assessment Area		Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total
Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	Area B	Pedestrian Bridge	2,940	0.1	\$ 1,764,000		\$ 41,400,000
		Park/Open Space	56,675	1.3		\$ 39,672,500	
St Paul Street to St John Street	Area C	Pedestrian/Multi-Use Bridge	12,246	0.3	\$ 7,347,600		\$ 30,100,000
		Park/Open Space	32,504	0.7		\$ 22,752,800	
St John Street to St James Street	Area D	Park/Open Space	49,746	1.1		\$ 34,822,200	\$ 35,000,000
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900	
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>213,247</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>\$ 17,253,000</b>	<b>\$ 129,144,400</b>	<b>\$ 146,500,000</b>
Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>			10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Areas B and E			\$ 8,140,000
Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>			100%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 154,640,000
VDOT Project CN Oversight			3%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work+allowances			\$ 9,278,400
<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>							<b>\$ 318,558,400</b>
CEI			10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 31,855,840
<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>							<b>\$ 350,414,240</b>
PE/Engineering Design			8%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 12,371,200
VDOT PE Oversight			3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 371,136
<b>PE Estimate</b>							<b>\$ 12,742,336</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>							<b>\$ 363,156,576</b>
PE/Engineering Design Phase					Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0927	\$ 13,923,551
CN Phase (with CEI)					Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.2003	\$ 420,602,212
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>							<b>\$ 434,525,763</b>
<b>SAY</b>							<b>\$ 435,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64

<sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval

<sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs

<sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026

<sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029

<sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads

<sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

**RECONNECT JACKSON WARD**

**ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022**

**CONCEPT 2 - MEDIUM CONNECTION (HIGH ESTIMATE)**

Structural Assessment Area		Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total	
Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	Area B	Pedestrian Bridge	2,940	0.1	\$ 1,764,000		\$ 41,400,000	
		Park/Open Space	56,675	1.3		\$ 39,672,500		
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000	
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900		
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>118,751</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>\$ 9,905,400</b>	<b>\$ 71,569,400</b>	<b>\$ 81,400,000</b>	
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Areas B and E			\$ 8,140,000	
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	100%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 89,540,000	
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work+allowances			\$ 5,372,400	
		<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>						<b>\$ 184,452,400</b>
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 18,445,240	
		<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>						<b>\$ 202,897,640</b>
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 7,163,200	
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 214,896	
		<b>PE Estimate</b>						<b>\$ 7,378,096</b>
		<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>						<b>\$ 210,275,736</b>
		PE/Engineering Design Phase		Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0927		\$ 8,062,045	
		CN Phase (with CEI)		Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.2003		\$ 243,538,037	
		<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>						<b>\$ 251,600,083</b>
		<b>SAY</b>						<b>\$ 252,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64

<sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval

<sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs

<sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026

<sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029

<sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads

<sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

RECONNECT JACKSON WARD

ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022

CONCEPT 3 - SMALL CONNECTION (HIGH ESTIMATE)

Structural Assessment Area	Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total	
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900	
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>59,136</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>\$ 8,141,400</b>	<b>\$ 31,896,900</b>	<b>\$ 40,000,000</b>
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Area E			\$ 4,000,000
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	100%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work			\$ 44,000,000
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work+allowances			\$ 2,640,000
		<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>					<b>\$ 90,640,000</b>
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 9,064,000
		<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>					<b>\$ 99,704,000</b>
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work			\$ 3,520,000
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 105,600
		<b>PE Estimate</b>					<b>\$ 3,625,600</b>
		<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>					<b>\$ 103,329,600</b>

PE/Engineering Design Phase	Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0927	\$ 3,961,693
CN Phase (with CEI)	Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.2003	\$ 119,674,711
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>			<b>\$ 123,636,404</b>
<b>SAY</b>			<b>\$ 124,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64

<sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval

<sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs

<sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026

<sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029

<sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads

<sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

**RECONNECT JACKSON WARD**  
**ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022**  
**CONCEPT 1 - LARGE CONNECTION**

Structural Assessment Area	Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total
Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	Area B	Pedestrian Bridge	2,940	0.1	\$ 1,764,000	\$ 41,400,000
		Park/Open Space	56,675	1.3	\$ 39,672,500	
St Paul Street to St John Street	Area C	Pedestrian/Multi-Use Bridge	12,246	0.3	\$ 7,347,600	\$ 30,100,000
		Park/Open Space	32,504	0.7	\$ 22,752,800	
St John Street to St James Street	Area D	Park/Open Space	49,746	1.1	\$ 34,822,200	\$ 35,000,000
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400	\$ 40,000,000
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0	\$ 31,896,900	
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>213,247</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>\$ 17,253,000</b>	<b>\$ 129,144,400</b>
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Areas B and E		\$ 8,140,000
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	60%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work		\$ 92,784,000
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work+allowances		\$ 7,422,720
<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>						<b>\$ 254,846,720</b>
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal		\$ 25,484,672
<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>						<b>\$ 280,331,392</b>
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work		\$ 12,371,200
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE		\$ 371,136
<b>PE Estimate</b>						<b>\$ 12,742,336</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>						<b>\$ 293,073,728</b>
				PE/Engineering Design Phase	Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	\$ 13,923,551
				CN Phase (with CEI)	Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	\$ 336,481,770
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>						<b>\$ 350,405,320</b>
<b>SAY</b>						<b>\$ 350,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64
- <sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval
- <sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs
- <sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026
- <sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029
- <sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads
- <sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

**RECONNECT JACKSON WARD**  
**ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022**  
**CONCEPT 2 - MEDIUM CONNECTION**

Structural Assessment Area	Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total	
Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	Area B	Pedestrian Bridge	2,940	0.1	\$ 1,764,000	\$ 41,400,000	
		Park/Open Space	56,675	1.3	\$ 39,672,500		
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400	\$ 40,000,000	
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0	\$ 31,896,900		
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>118,751</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>\$ 9,905,400</b>	<b>\$ 71,569,400</b>	
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Areas B and E		\$ 8,140,000	
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	60%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work		\$ 53,724,000	
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work+allowances		\$ 4,297,920	
						<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>	<b>\$ 147,561,920</b>
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal		\$ 14,756,192	
						<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>	<b>\$ 162,318,112</b>
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work		\$ 7,163,200	
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE		\$ 214,896	
						<b>PE Estimate</b>	<b>\$ 7,378,096</b>
						<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>	<b>\$ 169,696,208</b>
				PE/Engineering Design Phase	Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0927	\$ 8,062,045
				CN Phase (with CEI)	Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.2003	\$ 194,830,430
						<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$ 202,892,475</b>
						<b>SAY</b>	<b>\$ 203,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64
- <sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval
- <sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs
- <sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026
- <sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029
- <sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads
- <sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

RECONNECT JACKSON WARD  
 ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022  
 CONCEPT 3 - SMALL CONNECTION

Structural Assessment Area	Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total		
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000	
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900		
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>59,136</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>\$ 8,141,400</b>	<b>\$ 31,896,900</b>	<b>\$ 40,000,000</b>	
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Area E			\$ 4,000,000	
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	60%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work			\$ 26,400,000	
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work+allowances			\$ 2,112,000	
				<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>			<b>\$ 72,512,000</b>	
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 7,251,200	
				<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>			<b>\$ 79,763,200</b>	
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work			\$ 3,520,000	
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 105,600	
				<b>PE Estimate</b>			<b>\$ 3,625,600</b>	
		<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>						<b>\$ 83,388,800</b>

PE/Engineering Design Phase	Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0927	\$ 3,961,693
CN Phase (with CEI)	Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.2003	\$ 95,739,769
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>			<b>\$ 99,701,462</b>
<b>SAY</b>			<b>\$ 100,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64
- <sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval
- <sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs
- <sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026
- <sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029
- <sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads
- <sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

**RECONNECT JACKSON WARD**

**ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022**

**CONCEPT 1 - LARGE CONNECTION (LOW ESTIMATE)**

Structural Assessment Area		Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total	
Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	Area B	Pedestrian Bridge	2,940	0.1	\$ 1,764,000		\$ 41,400,000	
		Park/Open Space	56,675	1.3		\$ 39,672,500		
St Paul Street to St John Street	Area C	Pedestrian/Multi-Use Bridge	12,246	0.3	\$ 7,347,600		\$ 30,100,000	
		Park/Open Space	32,504	0.7		\$ 22,752,800		
St John Street to St James Street	Area D	Park/Open Space	49,746	1.1		\$ 34,822,200	\$ 35,000,000	
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000	
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900		
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>213,247</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>\$ 17,253,000</b>	<b>\$ 129,144,400</b>	<b>\$ 146,500,000</b>	
Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>			10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Areas B and E			\$ 8,140,000	
Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>			40%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 61,856,000	
VDOT Project CN Oversight			3%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work+allowances			\$ 6,494,880	
<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>							<b>\$ 222,990,880</b>	
CEI			10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 22,299,088	
<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>							<b>\$ 245,289,968</b>	
PE/Engineering Design			8%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 12,371,200	
VDOT PE Oversight			3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 371,136	
<b>PE Estimate</b>							<b>\$ 12,742,336</b>	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>							<b>\$ 258,032,304</b>	
					PE/Engineering Design Phase	Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0609	\$ 13,518,344
					CN Phase (with CEI)	Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.1572	\$ 283,849,551
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>							<b>\$ 297,367,895</b>	
<b>SAY</b>							<b>\$ 297,000,000</b>	

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64

<sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval

<sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs

<sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026

<sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029

<sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads

<sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

**RECONNECT JACKSON WARD**  
**ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022**  
**CONCEPT 2 - MEDIUM CONNECTION (LOW ESTIMATE)**

Structural Assessment Area		Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total	
Chamberlayne Parkway to St Paul Street	Area B	Pedestrian Bridge	2,940	0.1	\$ 1,764,000		\$ 41,400,000	
		Park/Open Space	56,675	1.3		\$ 39,672,500		
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000	
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900		
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>118,751</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>\$ 9,905,400</b>	<b>\$ 71,569,400</b>	<b>\$ 81,400,000</b>	
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Areas B and E			\$ 8,140,000	
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	40%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 35,816,000	
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work+allowances			\$ 3,760,680	
		<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>						<b>\$ 129,116,680</b>
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 12,911,668	
		<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>						<b>\$ 142,028,348</b>
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal+approach work			\$ 7,163,200	
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 214,896	
		<b>PE Estimate</b>						<b>\$ 7,378,096</b>
		<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>						<b>\$ 149,406,444</b>
		PE/Engineering Design Phase			Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0609	\$ 7,827,422	
		CN Phase (with CEI)			Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.1572	\$ 164,355,204	
		<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>						<b>\$ 172,182,626</b>
		<b>SAY</b>						<b>\$ 172,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64
- <sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval
- <sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs
- <sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026
- <sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029
- <sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads
- <sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features

RECONNECT JACKSON WARD

ESTIMATE DATE - 9/6/2022

CONCEPT 3 - SMALL CONNECTION (LOW ESTIMATE)

Structural Assessment Area	Delim	SQF <sup>1</sup>	Acres <sup>1</sup>	Level 1	Level 2	Total	
St James Street to N. 1 <sup>st</sup> Street	Area E	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	13,569	0.3	\$ 8,141,400		\$ 40,000,000
		Park/Open Space	45,567	1.0		\$ 31,896,900	
		<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>59,136</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>\$ 8,141,400</b>	<b>\$ 31,896,900</b>	<b>\$ 40,000,000</b>
		Adjacent Approach Work <sup>2</sup>	10%	multiplied by \$/SF subtotal for Area E			\$ 4,000,000
		Allowances/Contingencies <sup>3</sup>	40%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work			\$ 17,600,000
		VDOT Project CN Oversight	3%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work+allowances			\$ 1,848,000
				<b>CN Subtotal (without CEI)</b>			<b>\$ 63,448,000</b>
		CEI	10%	multiplied by CN subtotal			\$ 6,344,800
				<b>CN Estimate (with CEI)</b>			<b>\$ 69,792,800</b>
		PE/Engineering Design	8%	multiplied by \$/SF cost+approach work			\$ 3,520,000
		VDOT PE Oversight	3%	multiplied by PE			\$ 105,600
				<b>PE Estimate</b>			<b>\$ 3,625,600</b>
		<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE (PE+CN excluding inflation)</b>					<b>\$ 73,418,400</b>

PE/Engineering Design Phase	Inflation Factor <sup>4</sup>	1.0609	\$ 3,846,399
CN Phase (with CEI)	Inflation Factor <sup>5</sup>	1.1572	\$ 80,764,228
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>			<b>\$ 84,610,627</b>
<b>SAY</b>			<b>\$ 85,000,000</b>

Load Level	Assumed Loading	Live Load (PSF)	Dead Load (PSF) <sup>6</sup>	ROM \$/SF <sup>7</sup>
Level 1	Roadway/Pedestrian Bridge	75	35	\$ 600.00
Level 2	Park/Open Space (large shade tree plantings)	85	690	\$ 700.00

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Includes approximate total area of structural elements over I-95/I-64

<sup>2</sup> Assumes work associated with vertical integration in transition areas along Baker Street and Duval

<sup>3</sup> Assumes utility, drainage, interstate work, MOT and other potential unknown project costs

<sup>4</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming PE Start 7/1/2024 End 6/30/2026

<sup>5</sup> Inflation factor derived from VDOT CEWB, assuming CN Start 7/28/2026 End 10/27/2029

<sup>6</sup> Does not include structural elements required to support conceptual loads

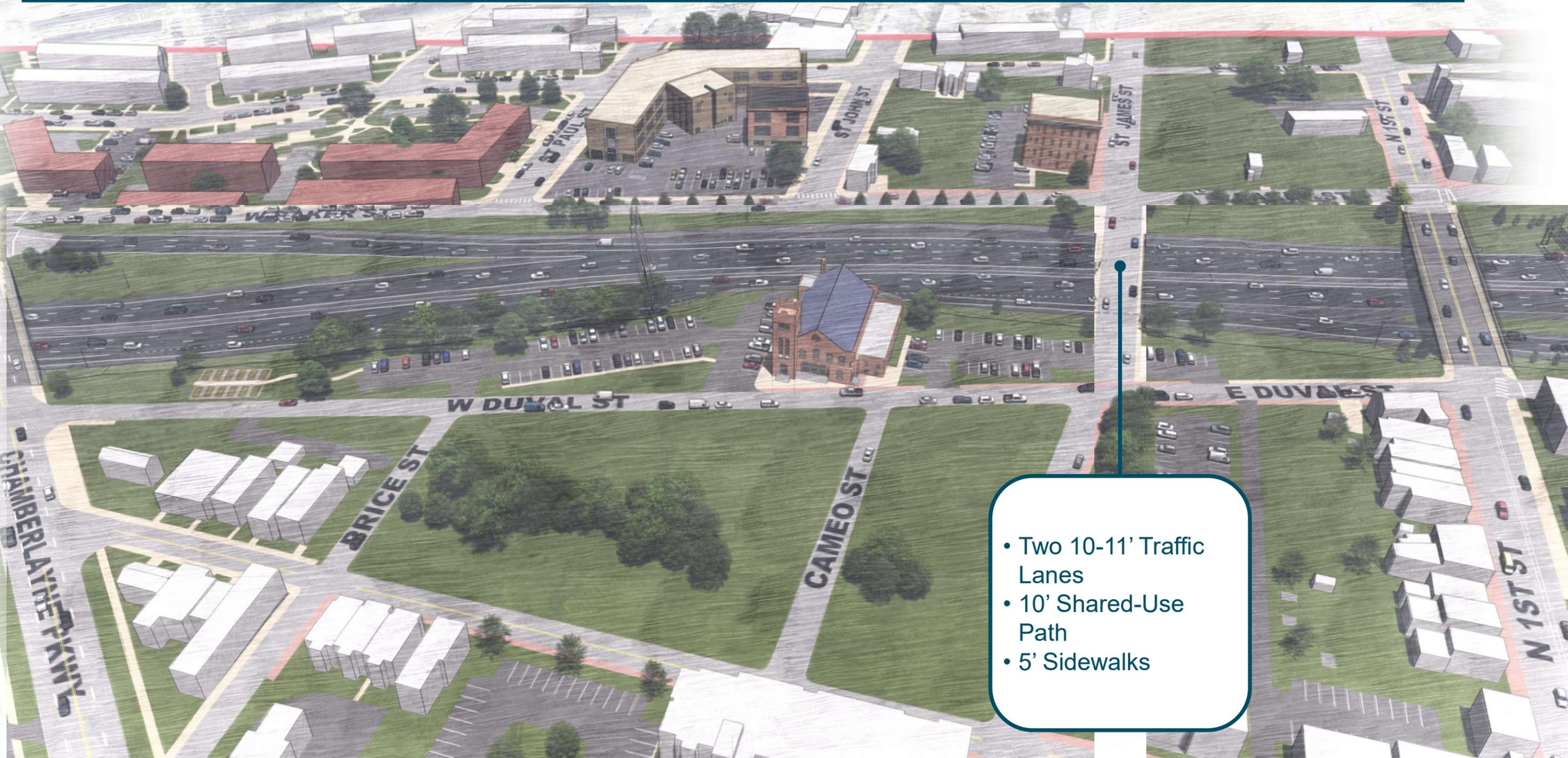
<sup>7</sup> Rough order of magnitude cost includes landscaping, amenities, and structural features



# Appendix C

## *Potential Phasing Visualization*

# POTENTIAL PHASING – SMALL CONNECTION (A)



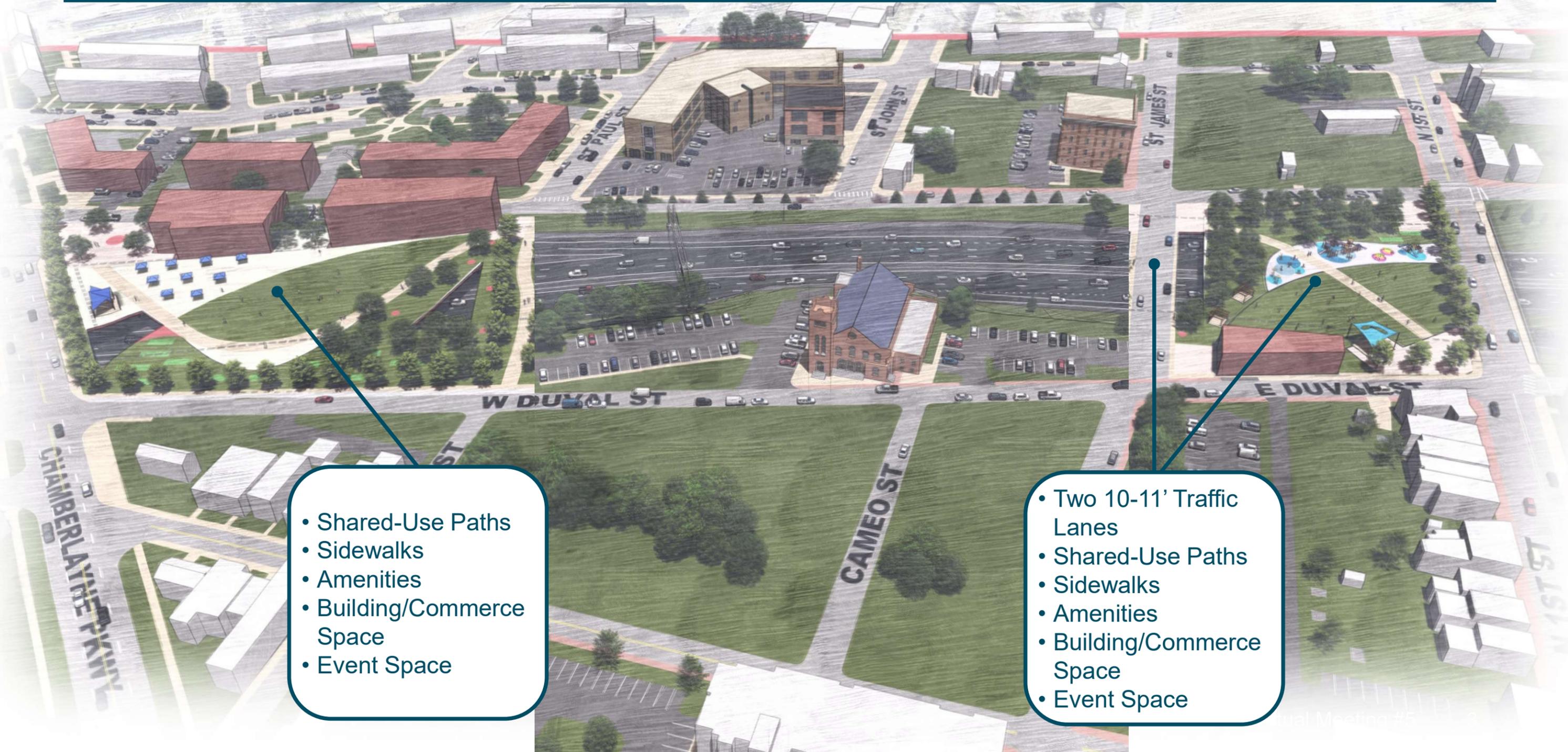
- Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
- 10' Shared-Use Path
- 5' Sidewalks

# POTENTIAL PHASING – SMALL CONNECTION (B)



- Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space

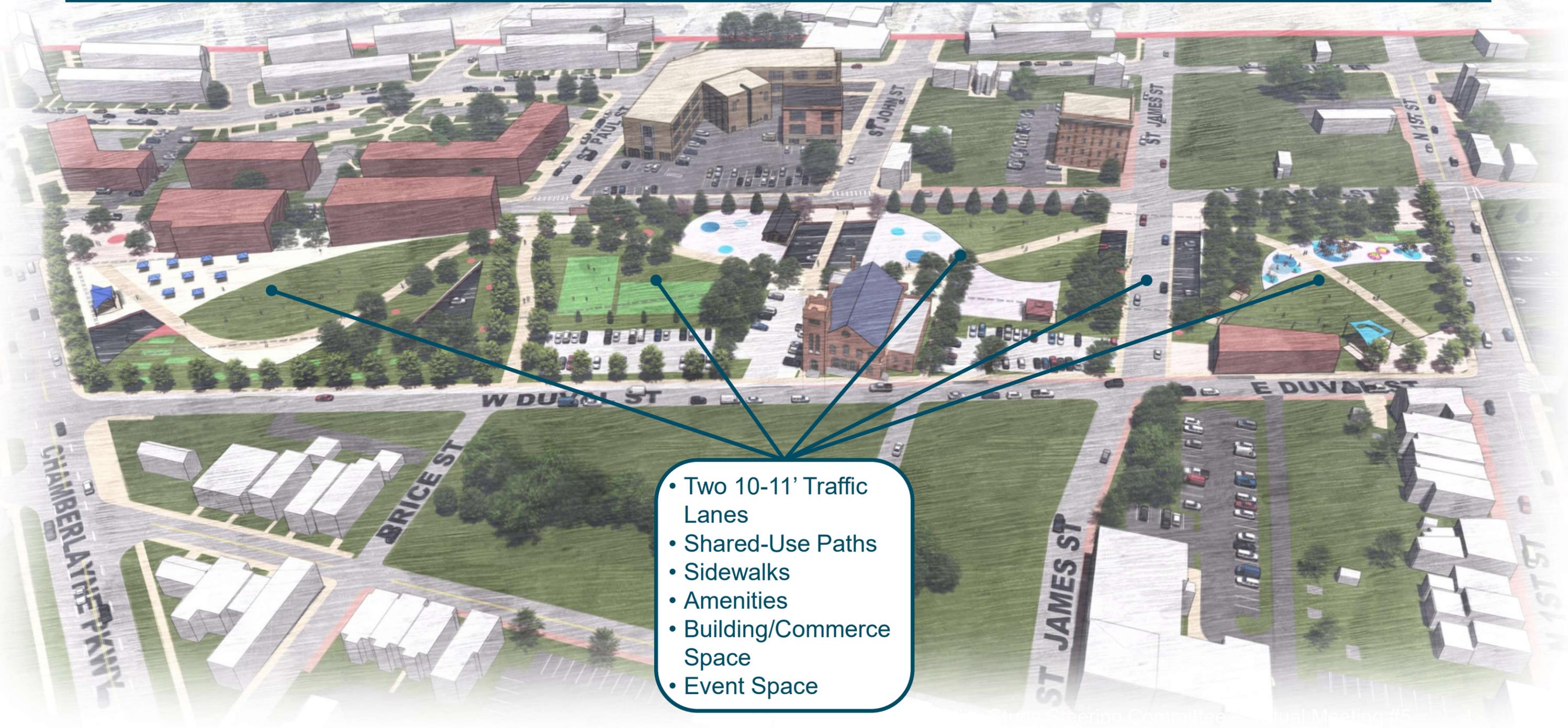
# POTENTIAL PHASING – MEDIUM CONNECTION



- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space

- Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space

# POTENTIAL PHASING – LARGE CONNECTION



- Two 10-11' Traffic Lanes
- Shared-Use Paths
- Sidewalks
- Amenities
- Building/Commerce Space
- Event Space



# Appendix D

## *Anti-displacement, Gentrification, and Reparations*

## ANTI-DISPLACEMENT, GENTRIFICATION, AND REPARATIONS: RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.1 Anti-Gentrification and Displacement

Key questions from community members throughout the study process related to the topics of gentrification and displacement in Jackson Ward and the Greater Richmond Area. When large parks and green infrastructure are built in historically marginalized urban areas, they can contribute to “green gentrification,” a process involving increases in housing prices and the influx of new, wealthier, and often white residents in low-income communities of color. Research shows that the threat of green gentrification is real in many cities, and it can lead to the displacement of longtime residents that many park equity efforts are designed to serve. Policymakers, planners, parks and housing advocates, and local community-based organizations are increasingly recognizing this threat and taking action to limit displacement. In the past decade, the revitalization of Jackson Ward south of the highway has already taken place with new businesses, apartments, and developments, increasing rents with the influx of new residents. If the appropriate controls are not put in place, the Reconnect Jackson Ward project and redevelopment of Gilpin Court can provide additional market pressure that would aid in advancing existing gentrification and displacement. These strategies were developed in order to address gentrification and displacement and are general recommendations for the City on how to confront these issues.

#### 1.1.1 Housing Needs Analysis and Plan

The housing recommendations listed here may be incorporated into the Housing Plan portion of the Jackson Ward Community Plan, which was in the early stages of development at the issuance of this feasibility study.

- Conduct a housing study to better understand existing conditions by identifying current home and rental prices as well as vacancy rates and how those things have changed over time.
- Identify potential developable areas (city owned, non-profit and private) to better understand what can be preserved and/or developed for affordable rentals and homeownership at various levels.
- Where are the opportunities for affordable rental housing and homeownership?
- What is a reasonable mix of prices and housing types, to preserve affordability and create a range of options?
- Where are there opportunities to increase density or change zoning to accommodate a mix of incomes, uses and other neighborhood amenities?
- What is the income mix goal for RRHA future redevelopment and properties?
- Identifying housing policies and programs that would help to preserve and build a range of affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities including:
  - Deep Affordability (30-60% AMI), Low Income (60-80%) and Moderate Income (80-150%)
- *Assist Renters* - assist low-income renters in the area through workshops and services and a fund to help existing residents stay and/or displacement funds to help transition.
- *Construct mixed-income housing* options that includes and range of low to moderate rental and homeownership options
- *Assist existing long-term homeowners & senior assistance*
  - Foreclosure assistance
  - Forgivable loans for home improvements
  - Property tax freeze

- *Support low-income homeownership*
  - Homebuyers club (education)
  - Homebuyers financial assistance (e.g. down payment)
- Build new affordable home ownership units (single-family, townhomes, condos)

*Potential Partners:* RRHA (owns existing land), Maggie Walker Community Land Trust (CLT) (owns lots in Northern section), Better Housing Coalition- (BHC) (developing existing lots for housing near 6th Mt. Zion), Partnership for Housing Affordability –(PHA) (policy options), HDAdvisors (housing analysis).

### 1.1.2 Small Business Preservation, Support and Incubation Plan

The business recommendations listed here may be incorporated into the Neighborhood Plan portion of the Jackson Ward Community Plan, which was in the early stages of development at the issuance of this feasibility study.

- *Map Black Owned Businesses* - identify existing Black owned businesses in or near Jackson Ward to better understand the type of business, needs and potential support.
  - Potential analysis of the existing retail space prices to see if there is an issue that would preclude new businesses from locating here (are there available spaces at reasonable prices?), have there been rent increases or sales of buildings that have displaced businesses and what are the opportunities in the future for rental, ownership or developing new property that would serve as a location for Black owned businesses?
- *Support Black Business Preservation and Incubation* - identify collaborations, programs, property, or development potential to harness present and future businesses. There is also an opportunity to provide grant, technical assistance and/or low interest loan support via non-profit organizations or the city's Office of Minority Business Development. Potential future opportunities could include:
  - Build, create or locate a Black business incubation space In Jackson Ward or as part of the Reconnect Project.
  - Create small business fund to assist black owned business to start and locate/co-locate in Jackson Ward (Similar to the Broad St Tenant Recruitment grant initiatives: Venture Richmond has been working with the Metropolitan Business League (MBL) to help recruit current small, women- and minority-owned (SWaM and immigration-owned firms to fill vacancies on Broad St.).t)
  - Low interest loans or grants, coaching and assistance to improve and expand existing Black owned businesses in Jackson Ward to support their growth and longevity. Working with existing organizations that serve Black owned businesses - such as the Jackson Ward Collective.
- *Incorporate Workforce Development* - Job creation for long-time, low-income residents (e.g. first source hiring) in construction, development and creation of jobs in or near Jackson Ward.
- *Include Commercial Space in RJW Project* - Event and/or gathering space that would be optimal to display, market and celebrate of Black owned businesses through Reconnect Jackson Ward development.

*Potential Partners:* The Jackson Ward Collective Foundation (JWC), Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Virginia Community Capital, City of Richmond Office of Minority Business Development (OMBD), City of Richmond Department of Economic Development, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Virginia Union University (VUU), Reynolds Community College, University of Richmond (UR), all other educational institutions in Richmond.

### 1.1.3 History, Arts & Culture & Placemaking Strategy

The history/culture recommendations listed here may be incorporated into the Neighborhood Plan portion of the Jackson Ward Community Plan, which was in the early stages of development at the issuance of this feasibility study.

Amazing public artwork, such as murals and sculptures in public plazas, can be seen throughout Jackson Ward. Many architectural, design, and art studios call it home as well, and with this suggestion we are elevating what is already there. The JXN Project, Black History Museum, Maggie Walker House and Monument, St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, countless murals, Elegba Folklore Society, and Second Street Festival are just a few examples of the robust arts, culture, organizational infrastructure, and placemaking efforts already in place to celebrate Black history and culture. The Jackson Ward Community Plan and Reconnect Jackson Ward project can be another way to creatively place new installations, another venue, curate new voices and places, and new points of interaction.

Further engagement related to the creation of specific locations and installations that thread together the north and south portions of Jackson Ward is a must. The following are potential ways the further arts, culture and placemaking that can take place alongside and in addition to the connection and community development plans in Jackson Ward. Potential ways to harness and synthesize existing efforts to create a solid and cohesive history, arts, and culture district/destination, including but not limited to:

- *Jackson Ward History & Culture Trail/Tour* - either virtually or markers to show history and present cultural markers, letting tourists and residents know where to go, what to see, what to know about the past and present. This could include incorporating the Reconnect project into the story that the larger JW community is telling through maps, markers, and marketing with Place based strategies to connect the neighborhood - past, present, and future - walking paths, virtual walking paths ((This is similar to the JXN Project, which built a trail and spray painted the sidewalk to show the trail course temporarily - but it would be fantastic to make it more permanent with permanent signage.)
- *Arts Engagement* - New opportunities to engage small businesses, artists, and makers to celebrate the past and curate future art. Makers competitions or artist grants for placemaking and interpretation throughout the reconnect sight and neighborhood.

*Precedent Plans:* See North Jackson Ward Area Plan and Starr Hill Plan (Charlottesville) for plans that outline ways in which to embody celebration and preservation of Black prosperity as central parts of future planning and development.

*Potential Partners:* The JXN Project, Black History Museum, Maggie Walker House and Monument, Elegba Folklore Society, Mending Walls, The Valentine Museum, UntoldRVA, Art 180, Architecture AR, Architecture Firm, Walter Parks Architect, [Invincible Studios, LLC, etc.](#)

### 1.1.4 Other Implementation/Funding Considerations

- *Establish a Foundation* - Other park and placemaking developments of the size, scale and significance of the Reconnect Project require or benefit from having a foundation to carry out the planning, implementation, and maintenance of the project. Establishing a foundation including many of the partners listed in this document would be an asset to the process and implementation of the project and the foundation can advocate for some of the other complimentary elements to support the project and help coordinate the planning and programmatic elements of the future connection as well as coordinate funding.
- *District TIF* - There could potentially be a tax-increment finance (TIF) district established for the Jackson Ward district that earmarks some of the increased tax revenue to support investments in the Jackson Ward community - such as the

preservation of a range of affordable housing and investment in small and minority owned businesses, arts, and culture in the area.

- *Council Ordinance(s)* - Enacting new policies to protect existing homeowners, revising zoning laws if potential rezonings are necessary to implement the vision of the housing and/or Jackson Ward community plan, in addition to researching the feasibility of some of the other strategies to ensure their legality given that Virginia is a Dillon rule state, would be necessary.

## 1.2 Reparations Research and Recommendations

During the community engagement process for the Reconnect Jackson Ward project, the issue of reparations was mentioned by attendees at the three public meetings between. More specifically, the need for the Reconnect project to address past harms against African Americans that were displaced by the highway project that bifurcated the Jackson Ward community.

### 1.2.1 Federal Level Efforts

Modern legislation addressing the idea of reparations has been stalled in Congress for decades. H.R. 40 H.R. 40 is named after the post-emancipation promise of 40 acres and a mule for the formerly enslaved made by Gen. Tecumseh Sherman as he was marching through Georgia. The bill, first introduced in 1989 by the late U.S. Rep John Conyers of Michigan, would commission a study on the effects of slavery and racial discrimination and develop reparations proposals for African Americans. For the first time last year, it was approved by the House Judiciary Committee, but it has yet to reach the floor for a vote (U.S. Congress, 2021).

Recently a number of states and cities across the US have initiated their own studies in response to the specific ways the Black people have been impacted by land use, zoning, planning, lending, and development related decisions in the 1900's.

### 1.2.2 State Level Efforts

In California, an interim report by the state's Reparations Task Force calls for implementing a "comprehensive reparations scheme," including policies to "compensate for the harms caused by the legacy of anti-Black discrimination." Preliminary recommendations include compensating individuals forcibly removed from their homes for park or highway construction, families who were denied inheritances because of anti-miscegenation laws or precedents; and those whose mental and physical health has been permanently damaged by health care system policies and treatment. In December, the state described how it will divide \$4.5 million among survivors of state-sponsored sterilization programs involving eugenics and forced-sterilization of women in state penal institutions, tying the funds to specific individuals who were hurt by the state (OGN, 2021).

A number of states are taking a closer look at racial equity in agriculture specifically and are attempting to reform existing systems. At least five states have introduced bills to stem Black land loss, but proposals in all but Illinois have died in committee. In Vermont, a proposal that included creating a Land Access and Opportunity Board was approved in a separate bill. A bill in Georgia would have created an office within the Georgia Department of Agriculture to encourage the growth of Black farmers and bring "oversight and accountability."

### 1.2.3 Local Level Efforts

- *Evanston, Illinois* – The City of Evanston City Council recently agreed to pay reparations to people affected by discrimination in lending, zoning laws and practices between 1916 and 1969. Residents or descendants of those who were discriminated against are eligible for up to \$25,000 in grants to purchase a home, upgrade their home or assist with their mortgage. The effort is funded by city tax from the sale of recreational cannabis. The Chicago suburb has authorized \$400,000 so far but plans to distribute \$10 million over the next decade. On Thursday, January 13, the City of Evanston’s Reparations Committee approved 122 applicants qualifying as “Ancestors” for the City’s Local Reparations Restorative Housing Program. The 122 Ancestor applicants were randomly ordered via a drawing, and the first 16 applicants will be eligible initially to participate in the Restorative Housing Program (City of Evanston, 2021).
- *Asheville, North Carolina* – On July 14, 2020, the Asheville City Council passed a resolution supporting community reparations for Black Asheville. The resolution calls for the city manager to, “establish a process within the next year to develop short-, medium- and long-term recommendations to specifically address the creation of generational wealth and to boost economic mobility and opportunity in the black community.” As of March of 2022, the Commission’s final composition is 25 members; 15 commission members will be nominated by persons from historically impacted neighborhoods, to include public housing and former historically African American neighborhoods. The Community Reparations Commission members will contribute approximately 5-10 hours per month, possibly up to 18 to 24 months to come up with recommendations. \$2.1M has been committed so far.
- *Greenbelt, Maryland* – In their last election, held in November 2021, voters passed the referendum that will direct the City council to create a 21-person commission to review and discuss the issue of reparations for African Americans and Native Americans in the City of Greenbelt and make recommendations.
- *Detroit, Michigan* – In 2020, The City of Detroit adopted a resolution to study reparations to Black Detroiters. In July of 2021, the reparations initiative was placed for a citywide vote and the City is currently accepting applications for their new reparations task force.
- *Nashville, Tennessee* – The City of Nashville is considering how reparations can help to ameliorate harm from construction on parts of Interstate Highway I-40 that in the late 1960s wiped out a once thriving Black community that included four historically Black colleges and universities and successful small businesses.

### 1.2.4 Recommendations for Richmond

Learning from current local reparations movement, below are some recommendations which Richmond could take:

- *General Reparations Study & Task Force* - Create a broad reparations task force to study reparations to people affected by discrimination in lending, zoning laws and practices and/or other policies to include highway construction between 1916 and 1969 (or another suitable date) to develop short, medium and long term recommendations to specifically provide reparations that address past harms through the creation of generational wealth and to boost economic mobility and opportunity in the Black community, such as rental assistance, increased home ownership opportunities, or job creation, among others.
- Reach out to the State and Federal government to assist in researching the history of decision-making on major state and federal policy programs.
- Engage local universities, such as Virginia Union University, University of Richmond, and Virginia Commonwealth University, in developing research.

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