

The James River Park Master Plan

Southeast Greenways & Trails Summit

2020



HARGREAVES
ASSOCIATES

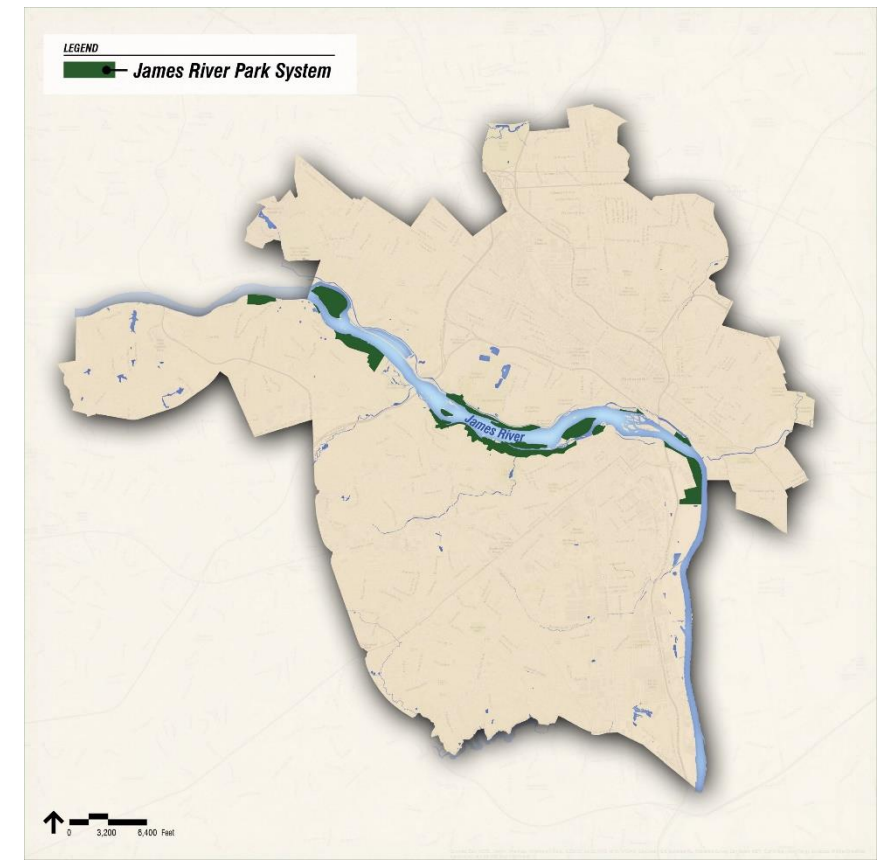
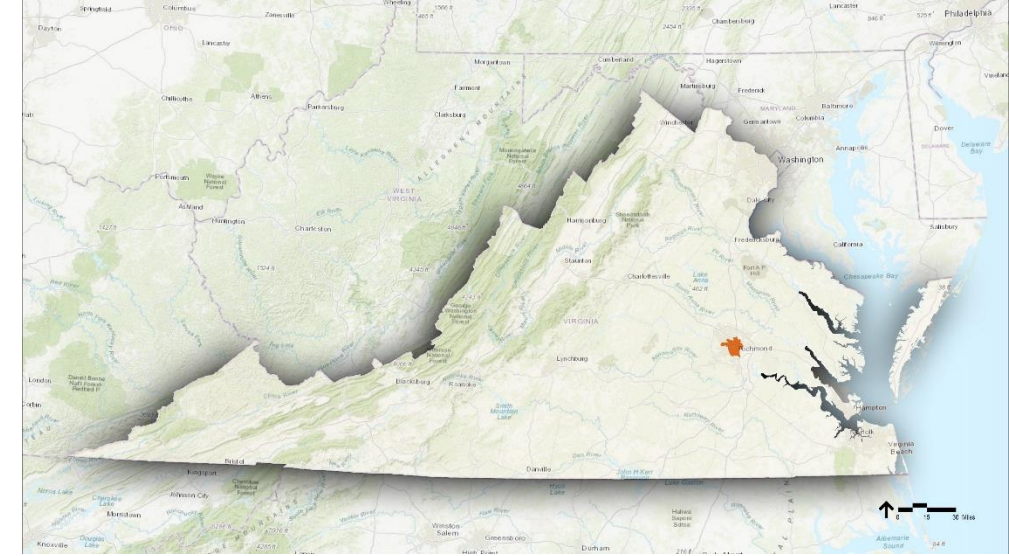
Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Park Background
- Master Plan Mission, Goals, and Objectives
- Primary Master Plan Elements
- Civic Engagement
- Regional Greenways and Trails Context



What is the James River Park?

- 600-acre James River Park System in the heart of downtown Richmond
 - Extends from Huguenot Flatwater to Ancarrow's Landing
- Named by REI as one of Six of the Best River Parks in the US
- The River is a major economic asset for the City
 - \$33.5 million per year
- City of Richmond Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Department
 - Seven full-time employees oversee all areas of the park



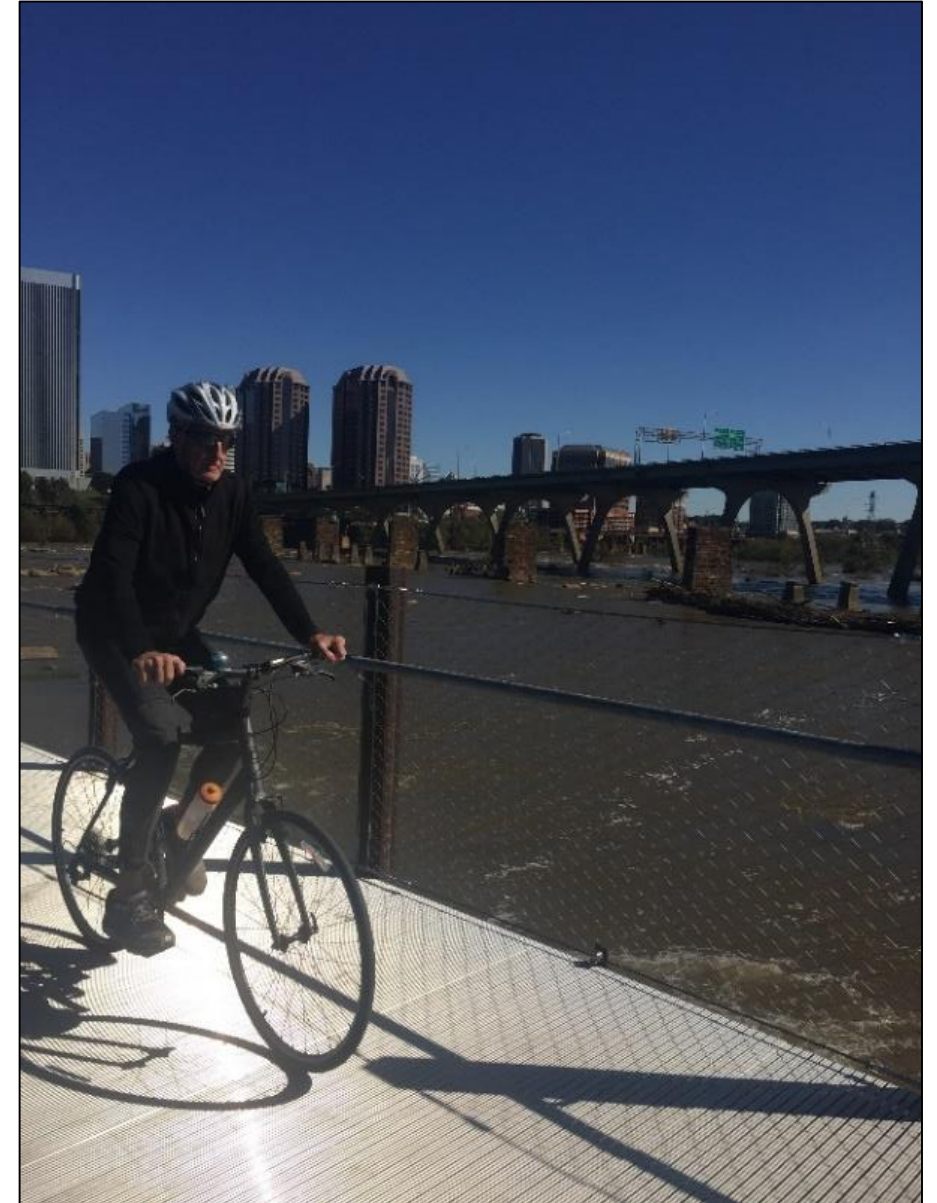
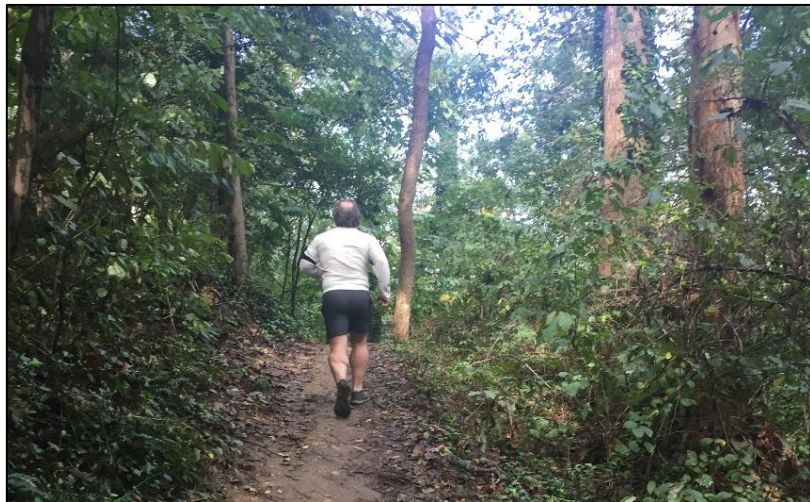
Who Supports the James River Park?

- Volunteer organizations
 - In 2017, volunteers donated 7,042 hours to the park
- Friends of James River Park (FOJRP) in partnership with:
 - James River Association (JRA)
 - RVAMORE
 - James River Outdoor Coalition (JROC)
 - James River Advisory Council (JRAC)
 - James River Hikers
 - James River Work Group of the Capital Region Collaborative
 - Sports Backers
 - The City of Richmond



Why a Master Plan?

- The James River Park is one of the major assets of the region
 - Close to 2 million visitors in 2018
- Increasing visitation, limited space, and sensitive environment
- Other factors:
 - To protect one of the region's most treasured assets
 - To create a plan for multi-modal transportation for the 2 million+ visitors who use the Park
 - To increase access for underserved populations
 - To address derelict structures
 - To ensure proper maintenance
 - To plan for long-term infrastructure improvements
 - To plan for highest and best use of limited development opportunities
 - To protect the wildlife and plant life in the Park



Thanks to our Master Plan funders

- 
- **Beirne Carter Foundation**
 - **CoStar**
 - **Dominion Energy Foundation**
 - **Friends of the James River Park Members**
 - **Mary Ann and Lou Wilson**
 - **NewMarket**
 - **The Community Foundation of Richmond**
 - **Venture Richmond**
 - **Virginia Dept. of Health**
 - **Cost of Master Plan: \$250,000**

Master Plan Outline

- Welcome
- Public Engagement
- Operations and Maintenance
- Natural Resources
- Transportation and Access
- Trails and Greenways
- Water-based Activities
- Park Buildings
- Park Activities
- Park Expansion
- Focus Areas
- Phasing and Implementation



Welcome to James River Park

26 SEPTEMBER 2019

JAMES RIVER PARK SYSTEM *MASTER PLAN*



Conserve the James River Park System as a sustaining natural counterpoint to urban life, balancing both active recreation and passive enjoyment of the Park while preserving and protecting the natural environment

Goals and Objectives

Equitable Access

- **Facilitate** greater access for diverse visitors to and through the Park and the James River
- **Provide** connections between non-contiguous Park properties and to regional greenways

Environment and Stewardship

- **Conserve** wilderness by protecting un-programmed areas for discovery and adventure
- **Protect** sensitive natural resources, reduce invasive species, and restore degraded habitat within the Park and the James River
- **Increase** Park conservation easement coverage
- **Preserve** cultural and historic assets in the Park

Educate and Expand

- **Educate** school children and visitors on the history, natural resources, and conservation aspects of the Park and the James River
- **Expand** and sustain recreational opportunities within the Park, where appropriate
- **Acquire** additional parcels to improve connectivity and increase the size of the Park

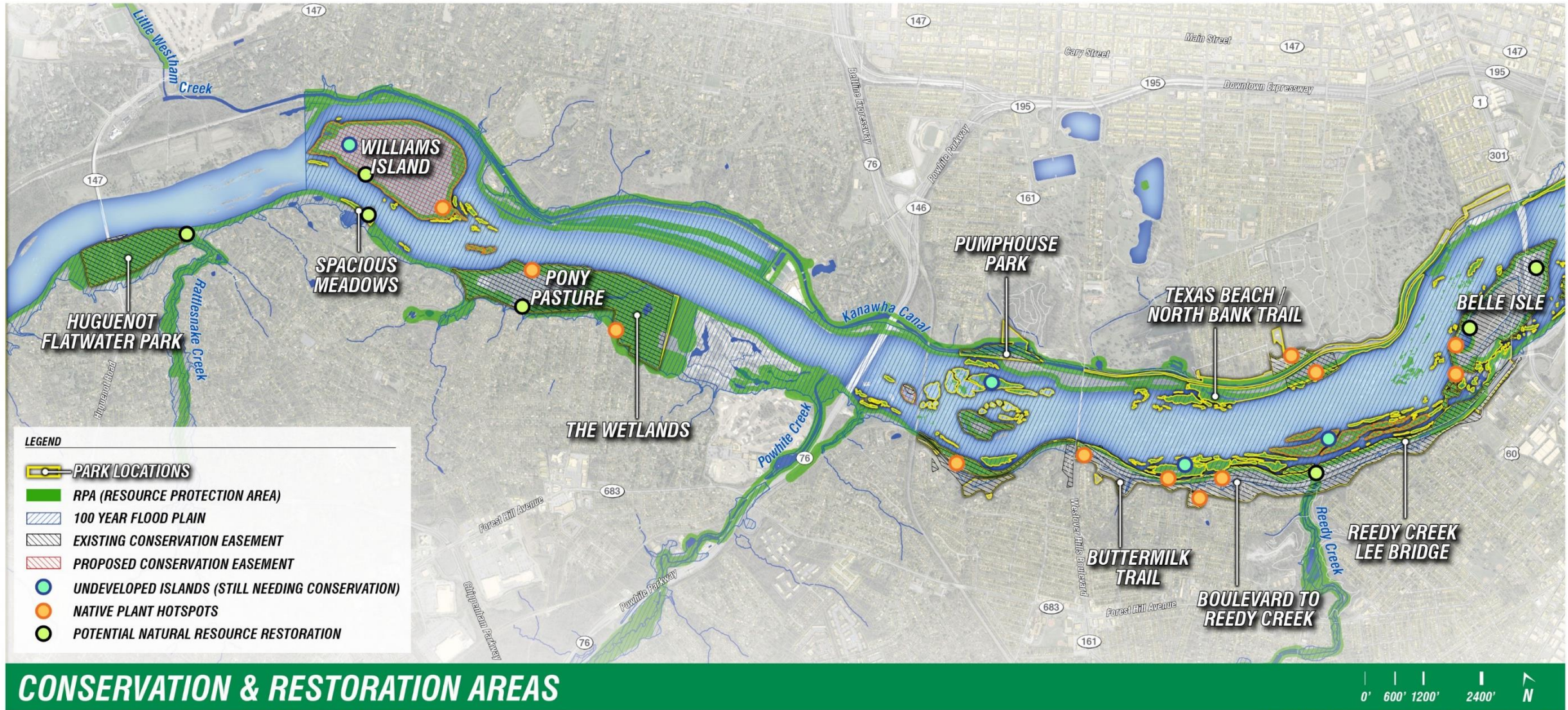
Strategies to Conserve Natural Resources

- Expand Conservation Easement
- Continue the work of the Invasive Plant Task Force
- Conserve important resources
 - Wildlife, its habitat, its ability to move through the Park
 - Forest cover, tree canopy, and plant communities
 - River and floodplain
- Restore streams and wetlands
- Reduce soil erosion
- Expand environmental education and awareness
- Continue to focus on environmental compliance



JAMES RIVER PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

26 SEPTEMBER 2019



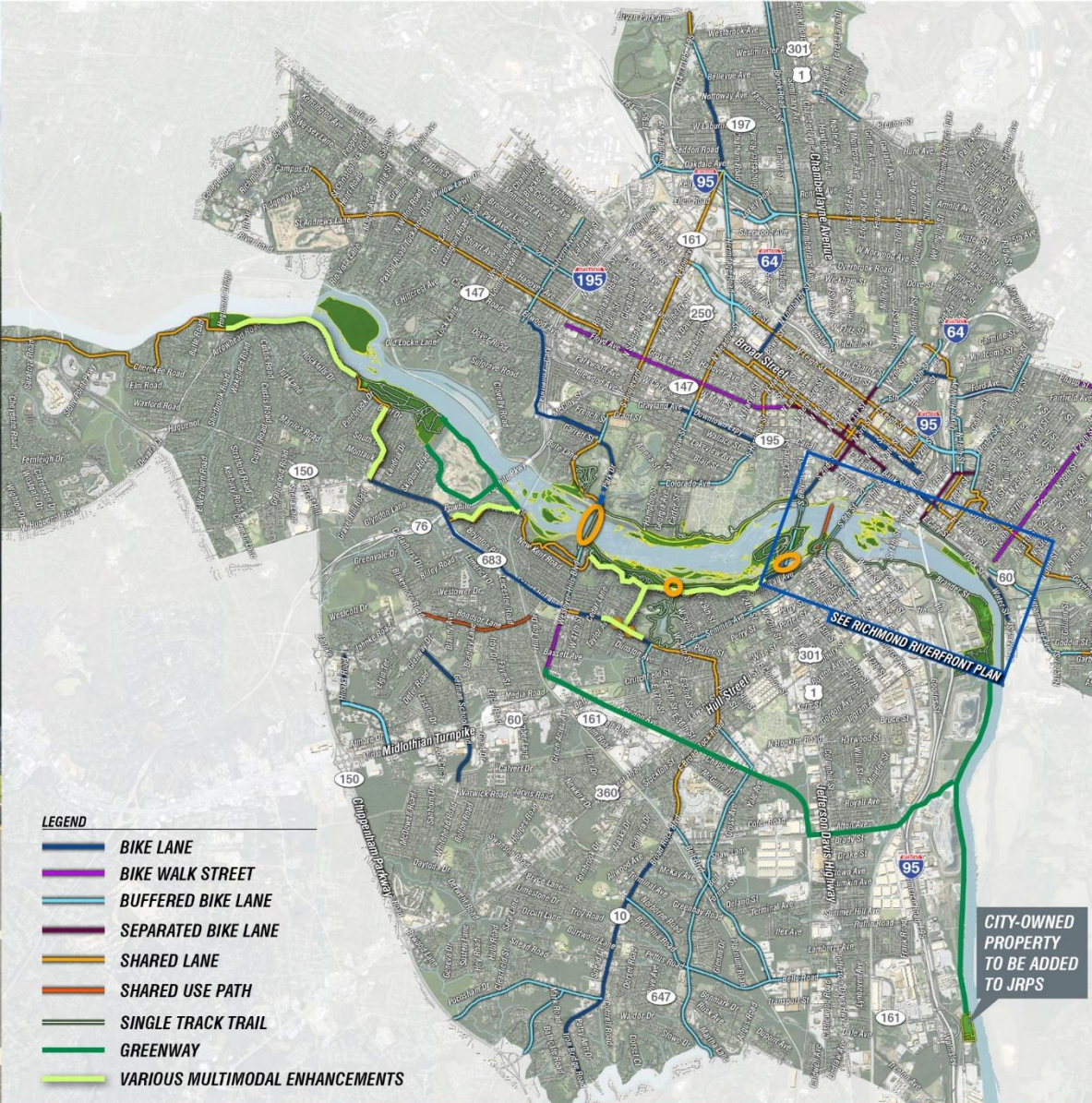
Strategies for Reducing Vehicular Trips to the Park

- Prohibit construction of new parking areas serving the Park
- Remove impervious cover and/or reduce parking
- Charge non-City residents for parking
- Increase GRTC service
- Implement public and/or private shuttle service
- Improve roadway crossings into the Park
- Improve multimodal neighborhood connections
- Implement streetscape connections in Riverfront Plan



JAMES RIVER PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

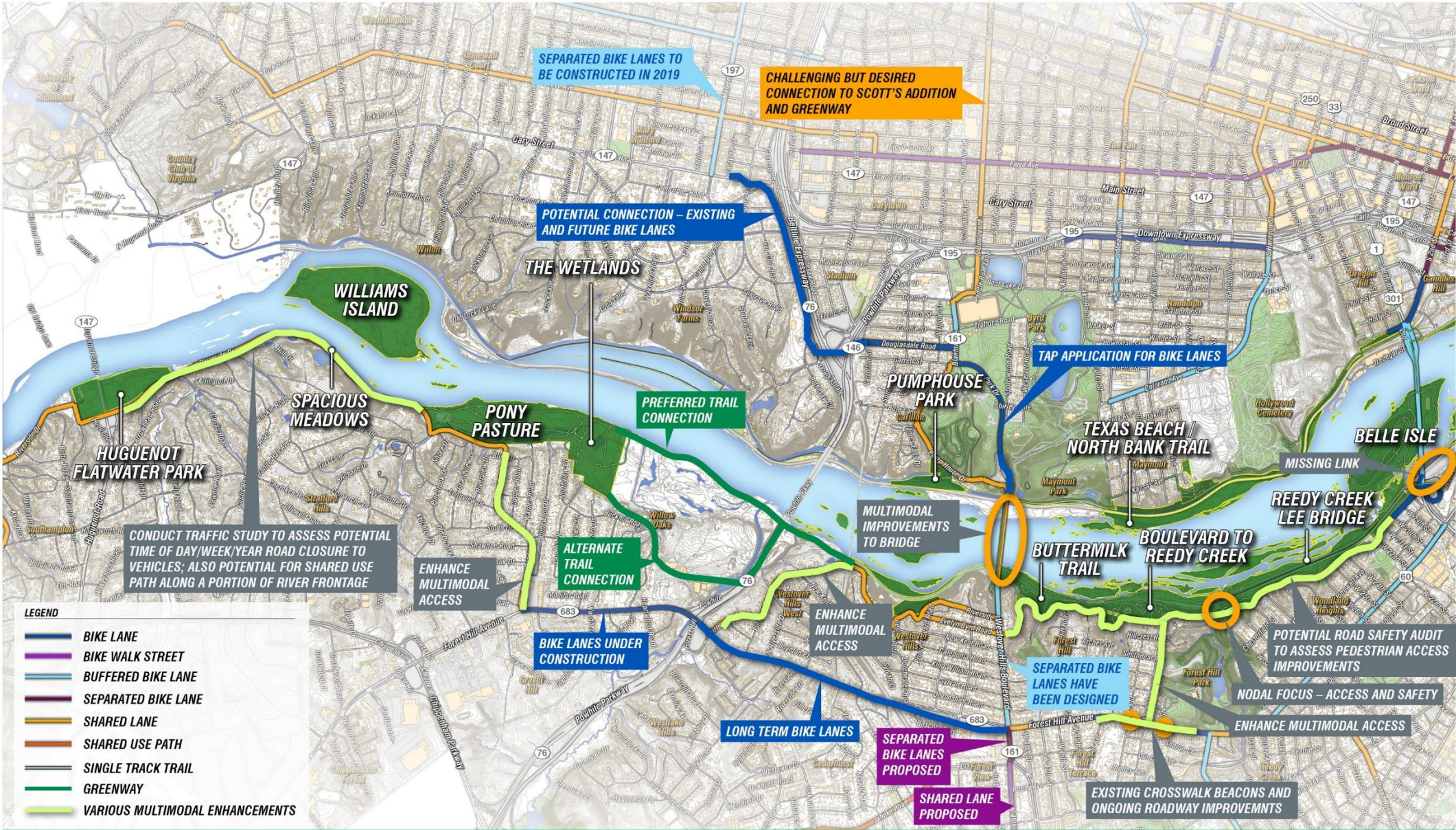
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MULTIMODAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

0' 1800' 3600' 7200' N

JAMES RIVER PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

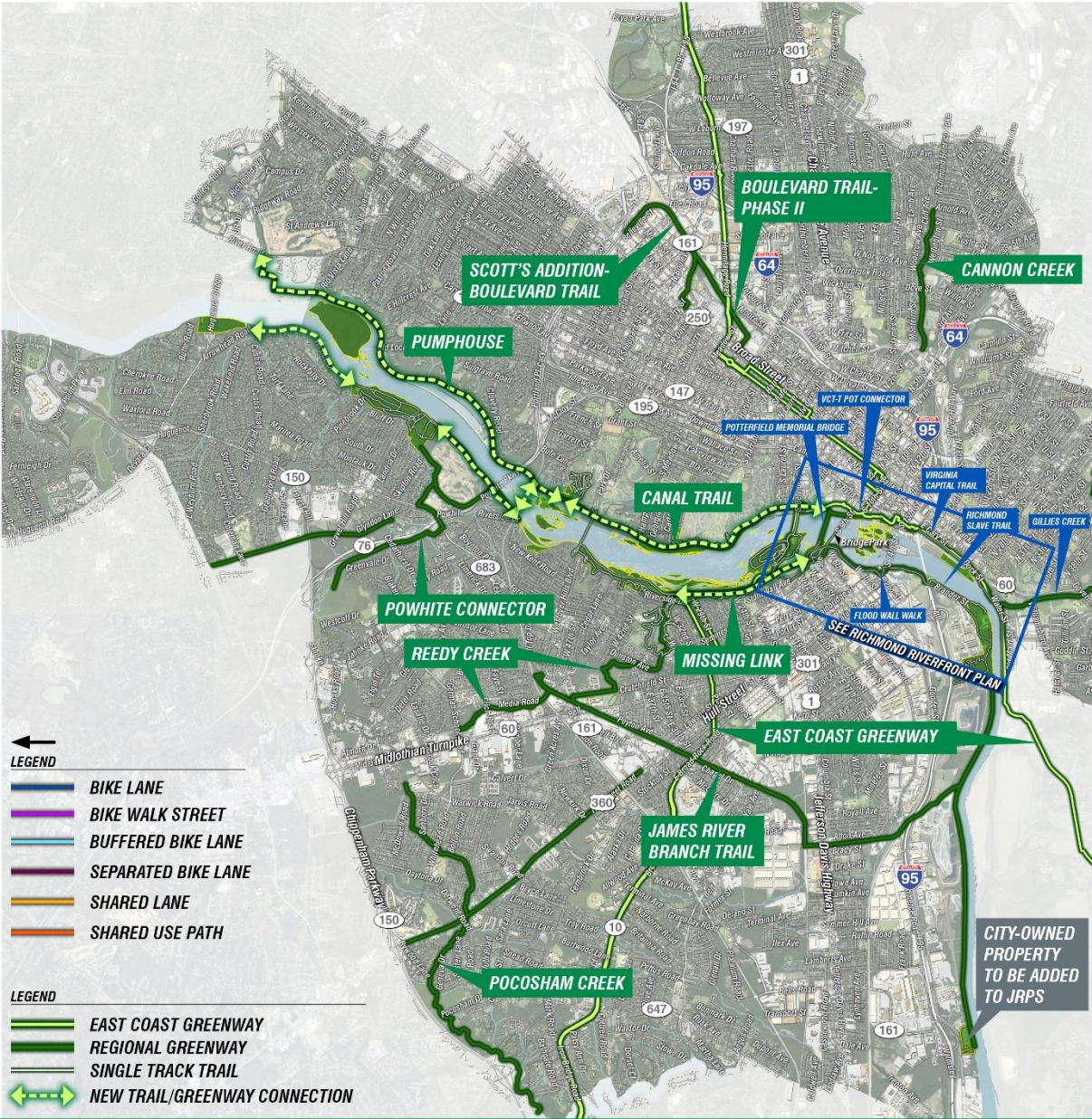
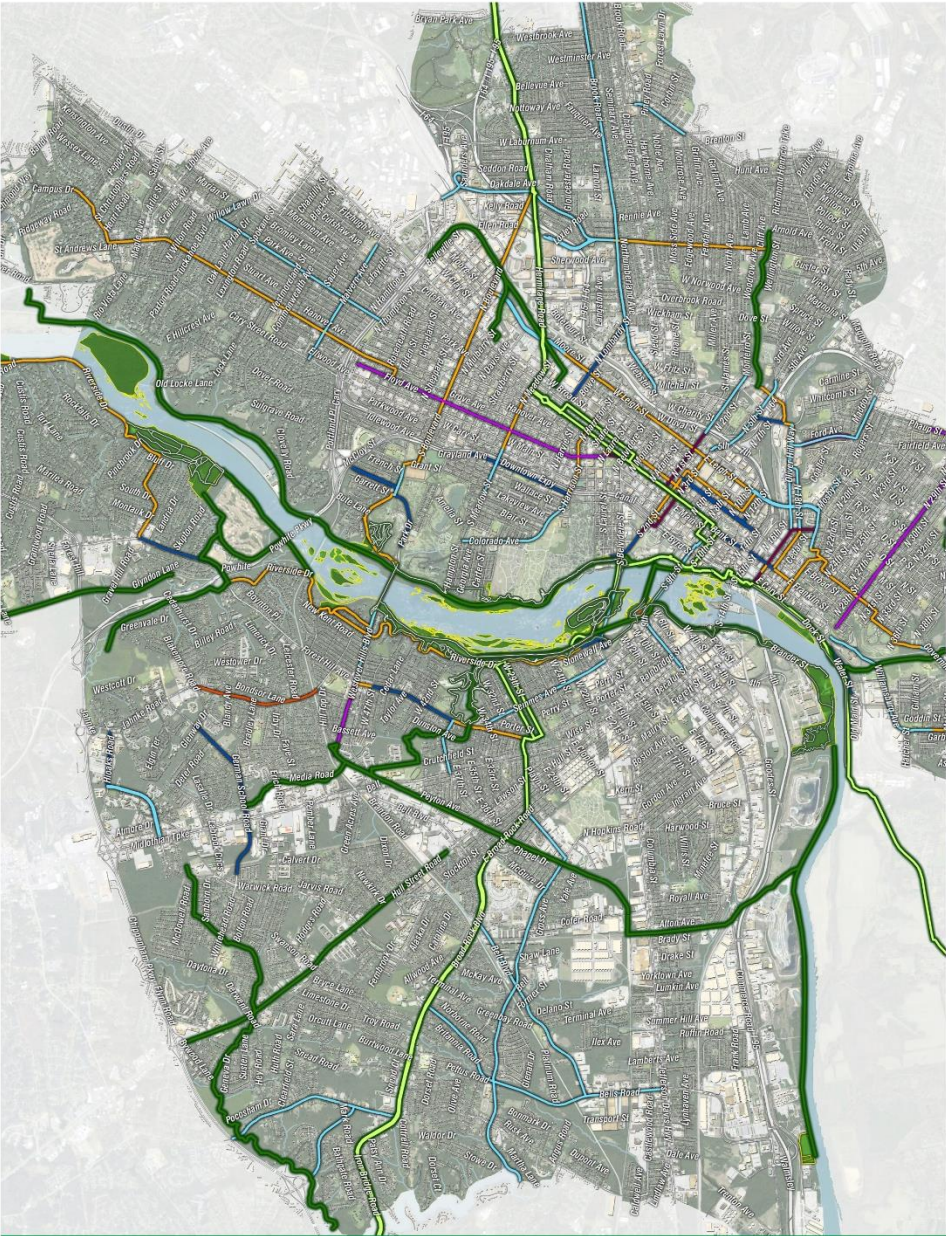


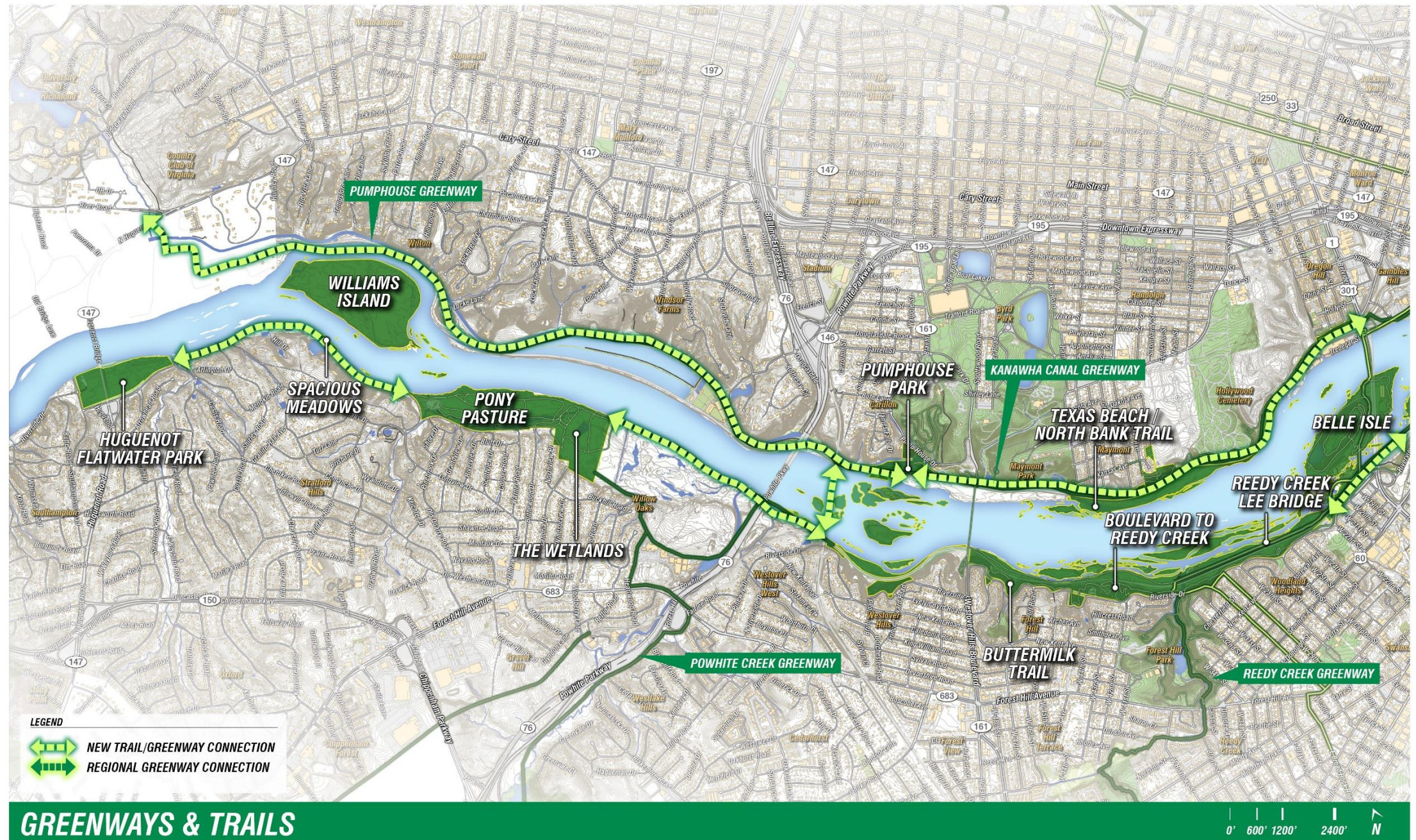
MULTIMODAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Strategies for Enhancing the Trails and Greenways System

- Support funding and implementation of Regional Greenways
 - Gillies Creek
 - Reedy Creek
 - James River Branch Trail
 - Powhite Creek Greenway
 - East Coast Greenway
- Ensure that regional projects include JRPS wayfinding
- Pursue east-west connections
 - Huguenot Flatwater to Pony Pasture
 - Pony Pasture to Buttermilk
 - Pump House Greenway
 - Kanawha Canal Greenway
- Implement connections from Riverfront Plan, including Missing Link
- Maintain existing singletrack
- Preserve adventure by leaving certain areas difficult to access







Civic Engagement Process



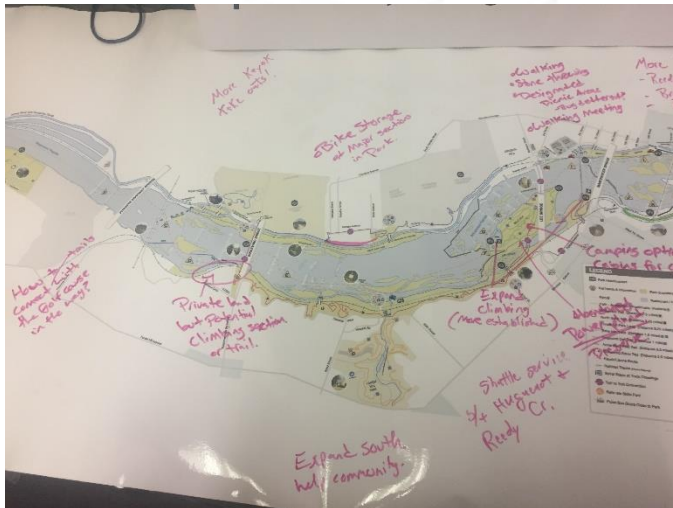
A Stakeholder Driven Plan

- Stakeholders & Decision Makers
 - Steering Committee
 - Friends of James River Park
 - Other Park volunteer organizations
 - Technical Committee
 - City staff
 - City residents
 - Regional residents



Gathering the Input

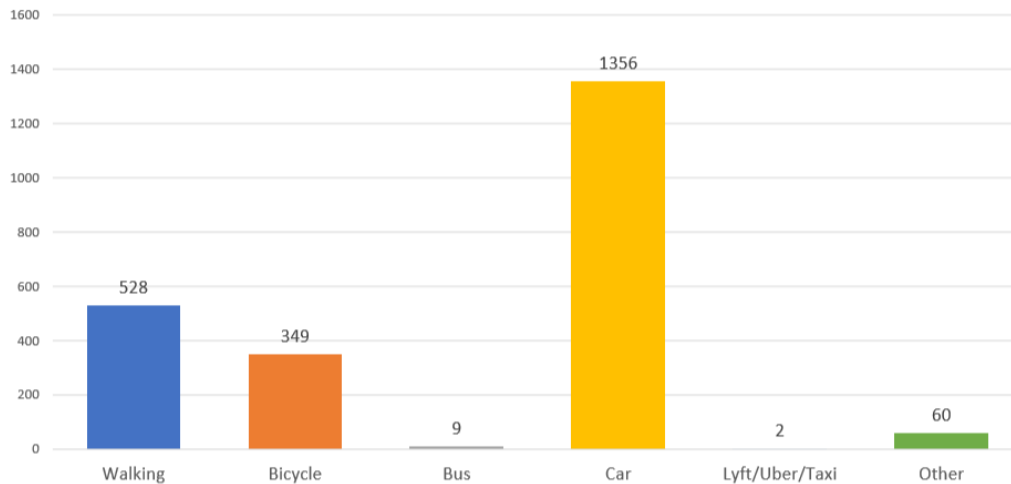
- Neighborhood meetings
 - Within Richmond's 9 Districts
- 1 City-wide meeting
- Pop up meetings and additional outreach from volunteer groups
- Over 2,300 survey responses
 - Survey provided in English and Spanish
- Final online survey to review thoughts on draft plan and prioritize strategies for implementation



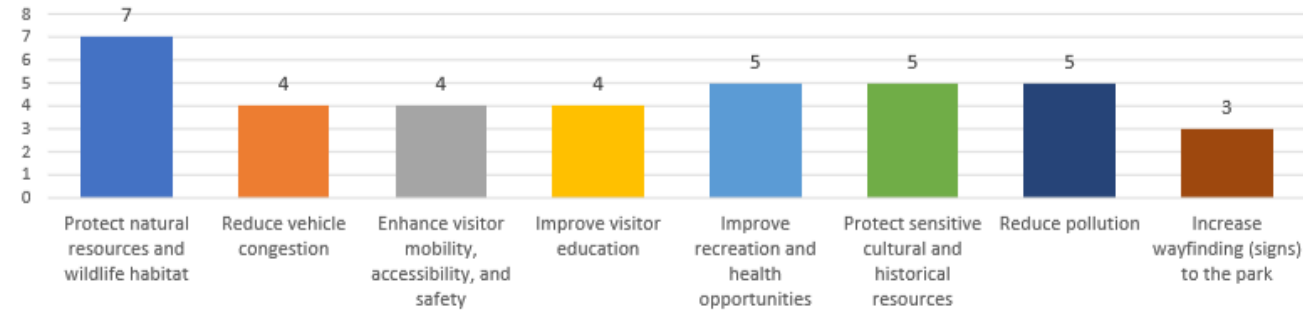
How the Input Helped Shape the Plan

- Formulated the recommendations & strategies
- Prioritized recommendations and the implementation strategies

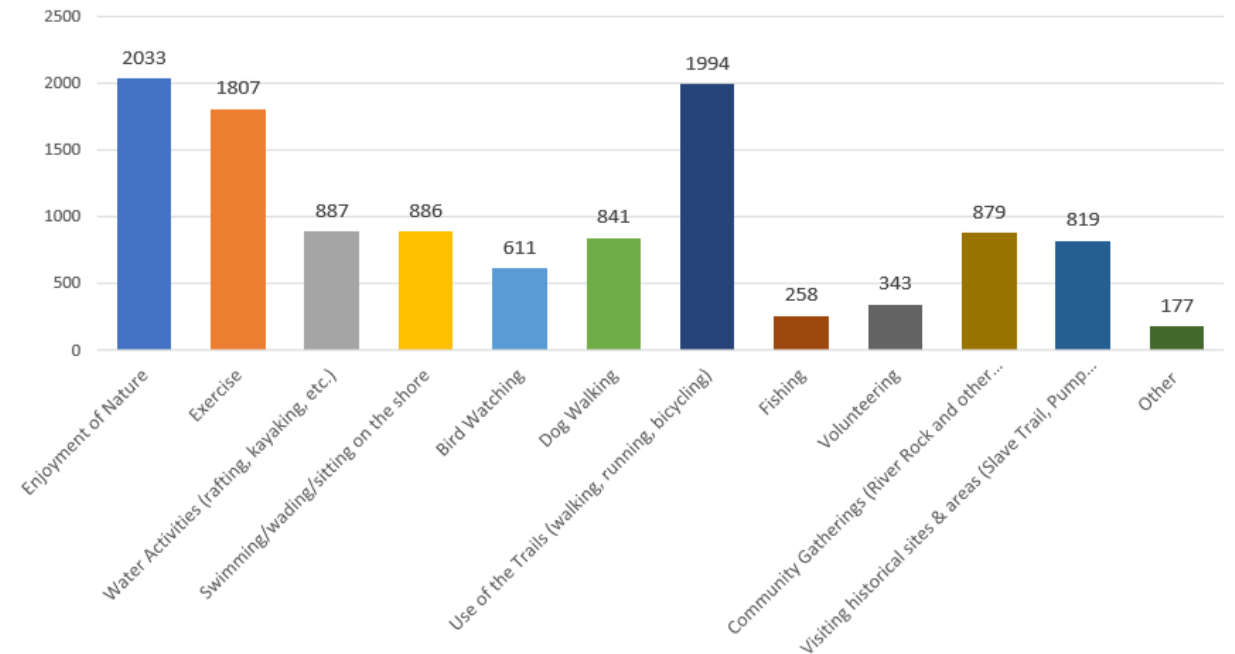
What is Your Primary Mode of Transportation to Access the James River Park?



Rank the options below based on your priorities for the future of the park. Please list the items from the most important (8) to least important (1)



What Activities Do You Enjoy at the Park?



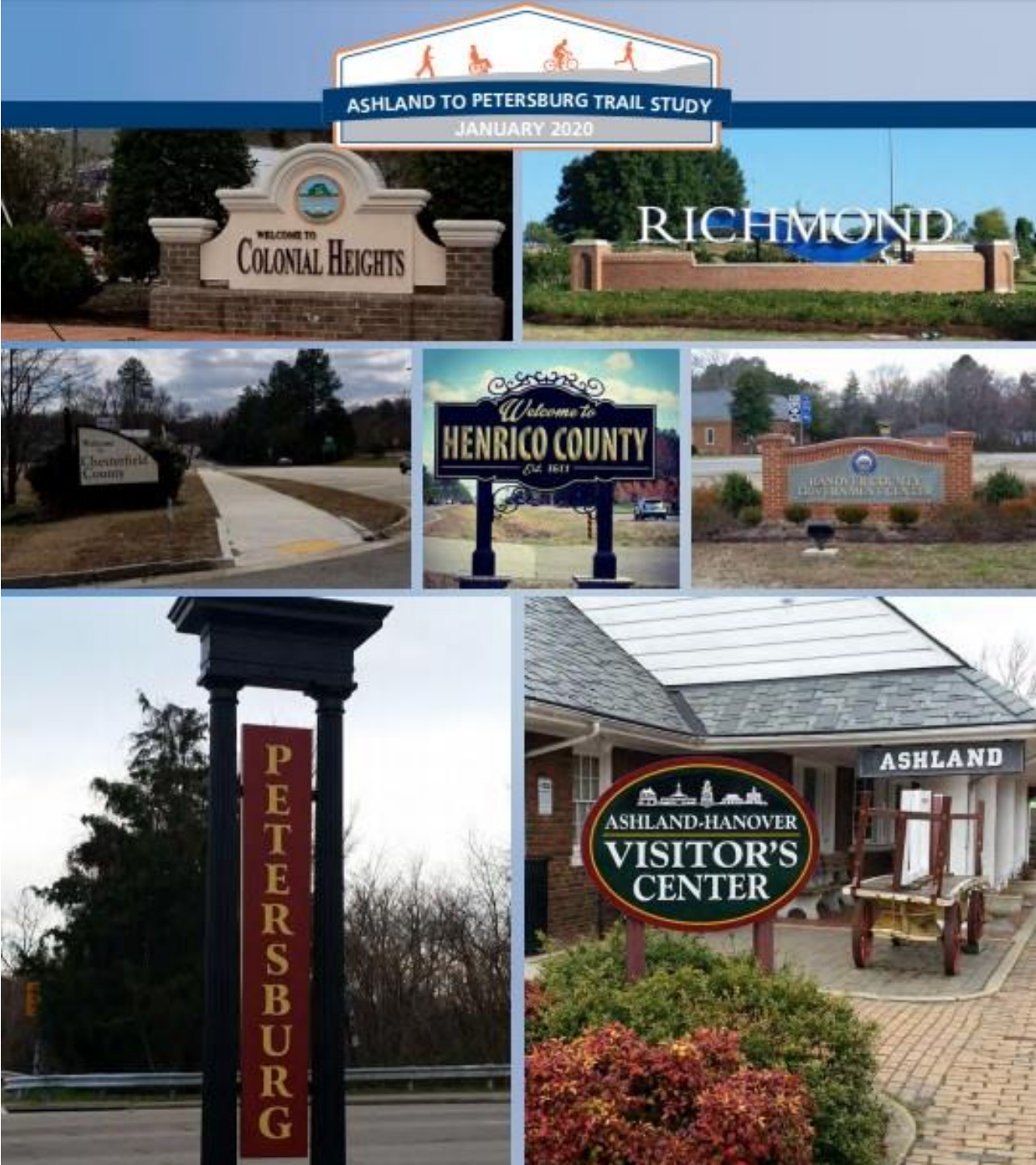
Regional Context and the East Coast Greenway



Strategies for Enhancing the Trails and Greenways System

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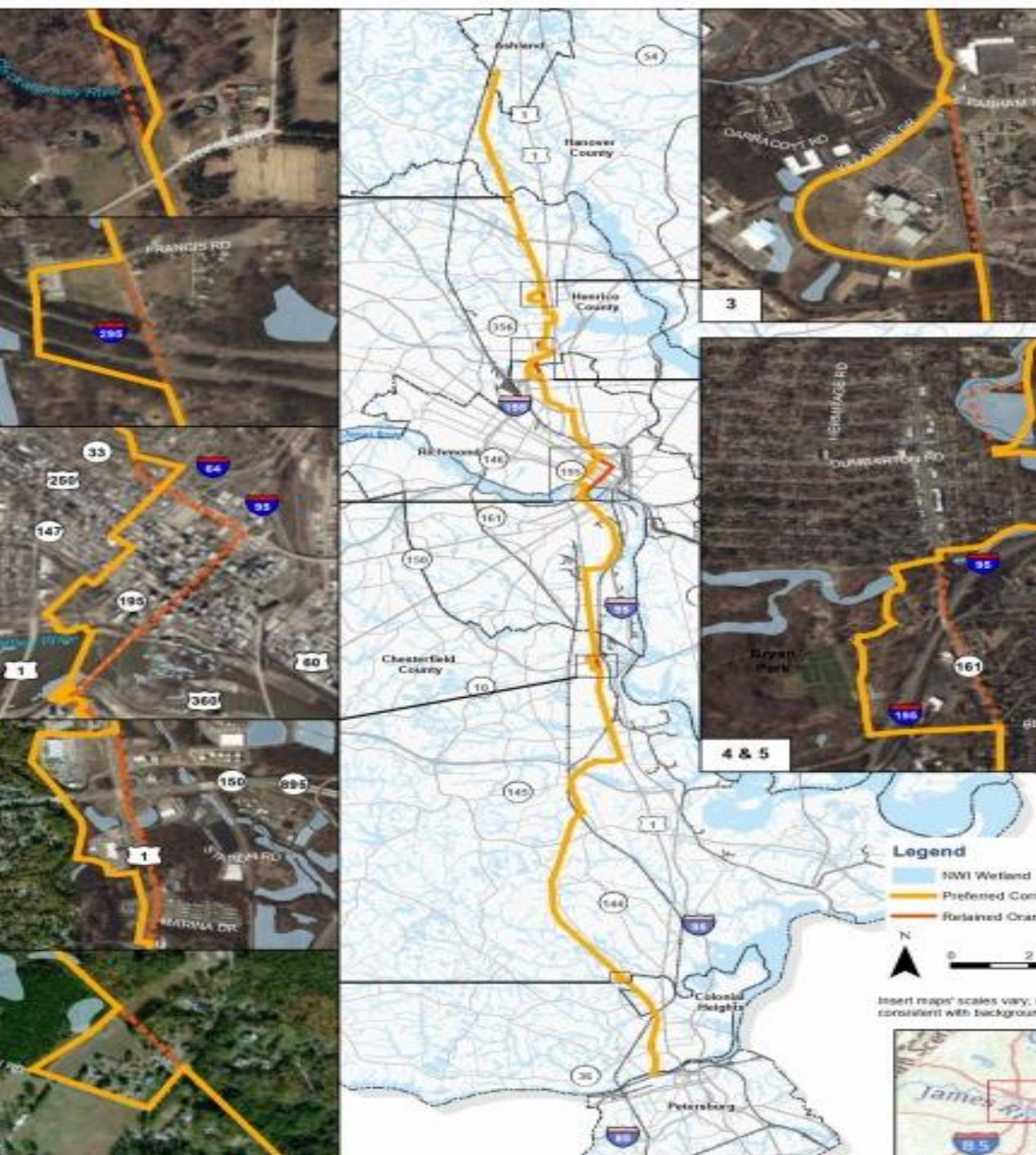


Ashland to
Petersburg
Trail Study

Ashland to Petersburg Trail Study

VDOT studied six corridors connecting Town of Ashland to City of Petersburg

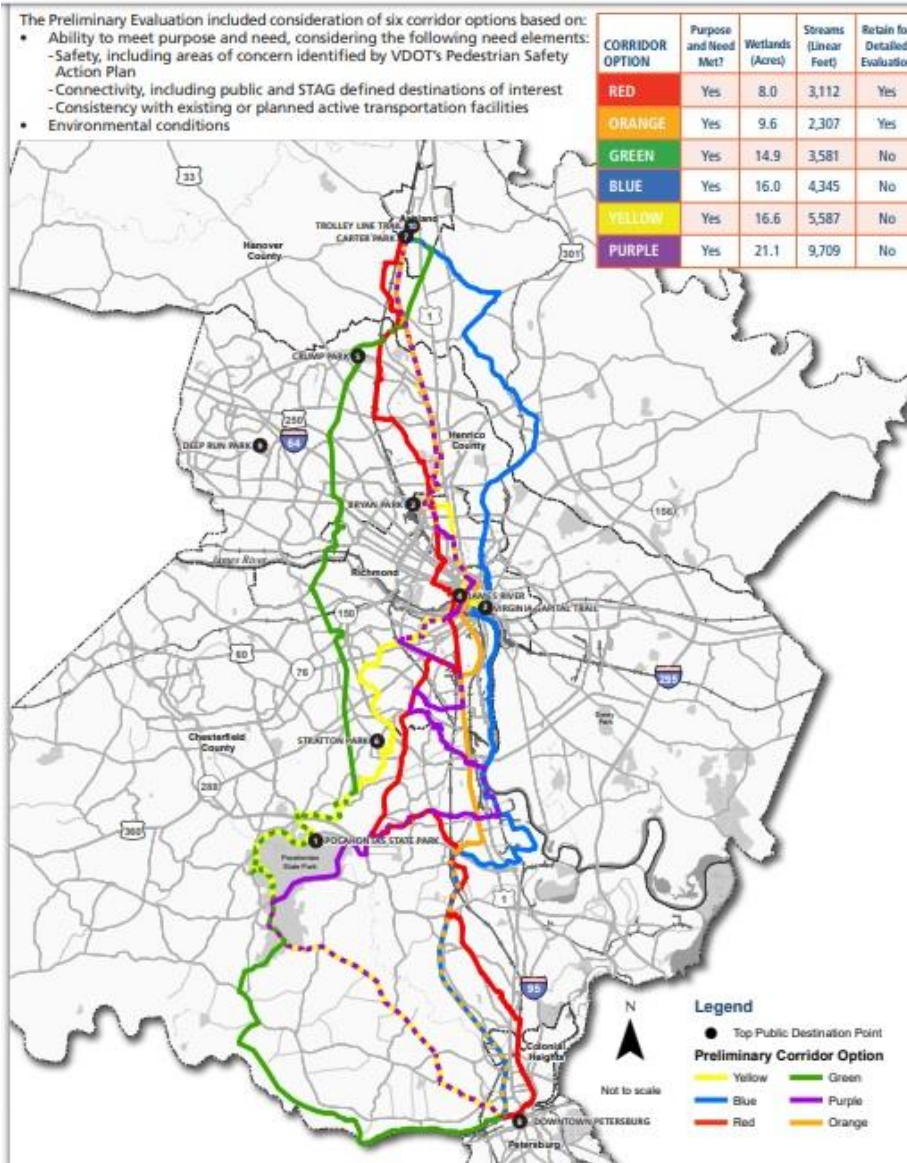
- **Identify preferred corridor for multi-use trail covering a distance of about 44 miles**
- **Seven regional localities**
- **Estimated: \$106,363,875**
- **Results released February 4**
- **Completed ahead of potential SMART SCALE applications**



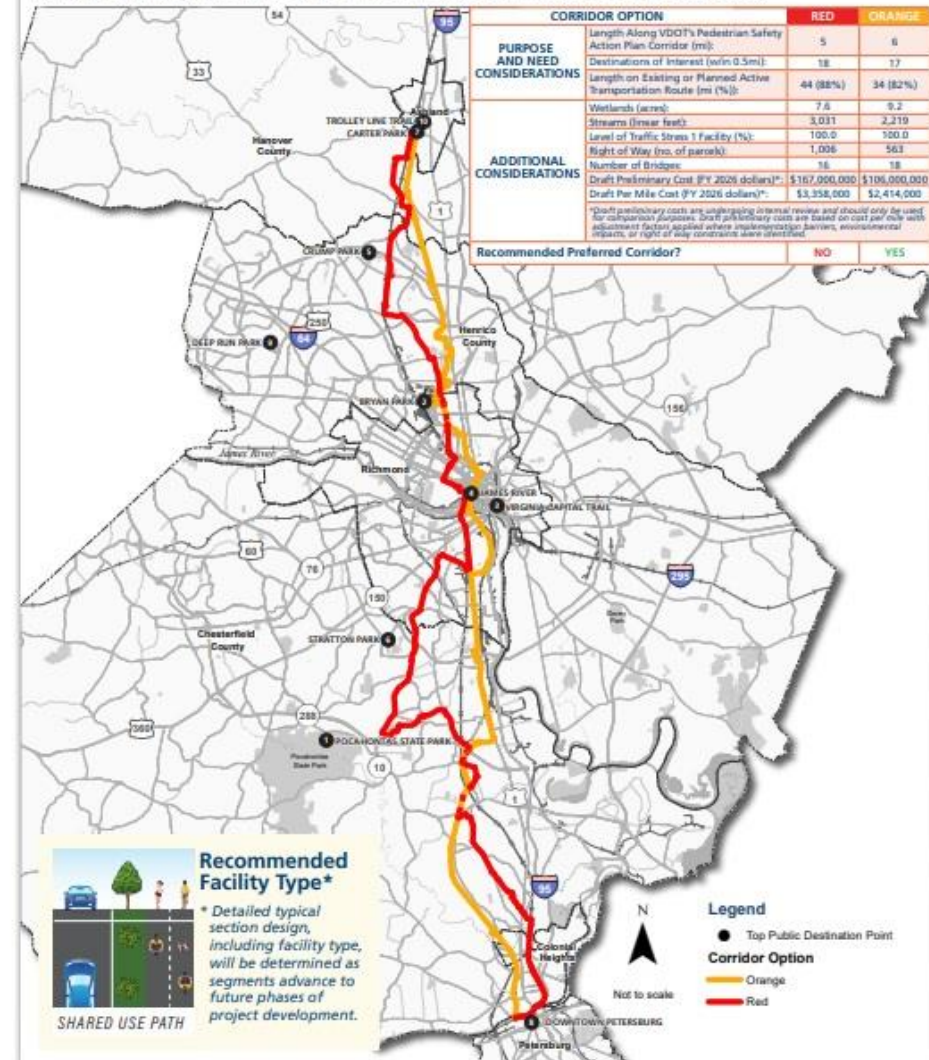
Credit: VDOT

Preliminary Maps: ATP Trail Study

Credit: VDOT



The Detailed Evaluation analyzed the corridors retained from the Preliminary Evaluation Results, which met purpose and need and represented the least impact to aquatic resources, which indicates these corridors as appearing to be permissible. Please note that no permits are being secured as part of this planning study. The two (2) corridors were evaluated with consideration given to cost and feasibility of implementation to identify the most practicable preferred corridor. Based on STAG feedback, both corridor options were reviewed and minor adjustments were made and are represented in the associated mapping and table below.



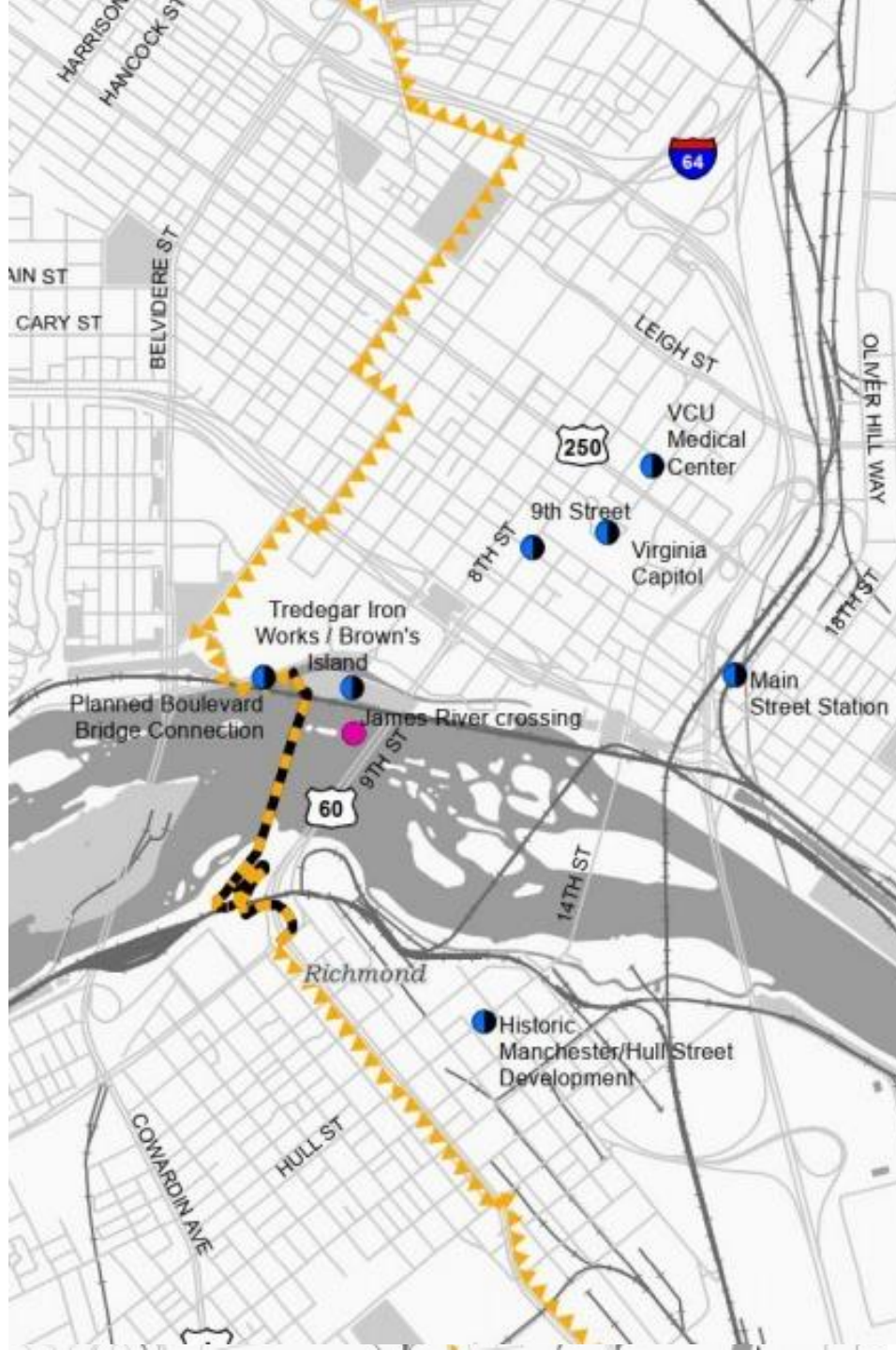
Ashland to Petersburg Trail Study

VDOT studied six corridors connecting Town of Ashland to City of Petersburg

- Evaluation of existing conditions
- Corridor least impactful to environmental resources
- Feedback from state and federal agencies, affected localities, special interest groups, and general public
- Trail would be logical reroute for ECG throughout Richmond region

Credit: VDOT





Ashland to Petersburg Trail Study

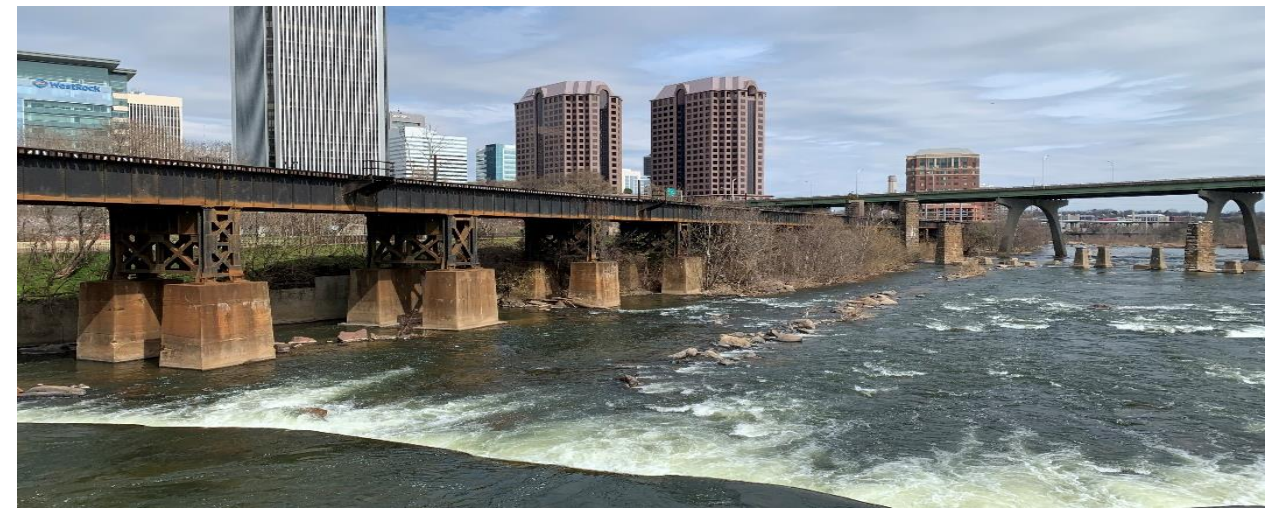
T. Tyler Potterfield Bridge

- **First major project from 2012 Riverfront master plan**
- **Renovation of former dam**
- **1,700-foot span (~0.33 mile)**
- **Approximately \$11 million**
- **Completed in late 2016**
- **Part of James River Park**
- **Instant regional destination and social media attraction**

Credit: VDOT



T. Tyler Potterfield Bridge

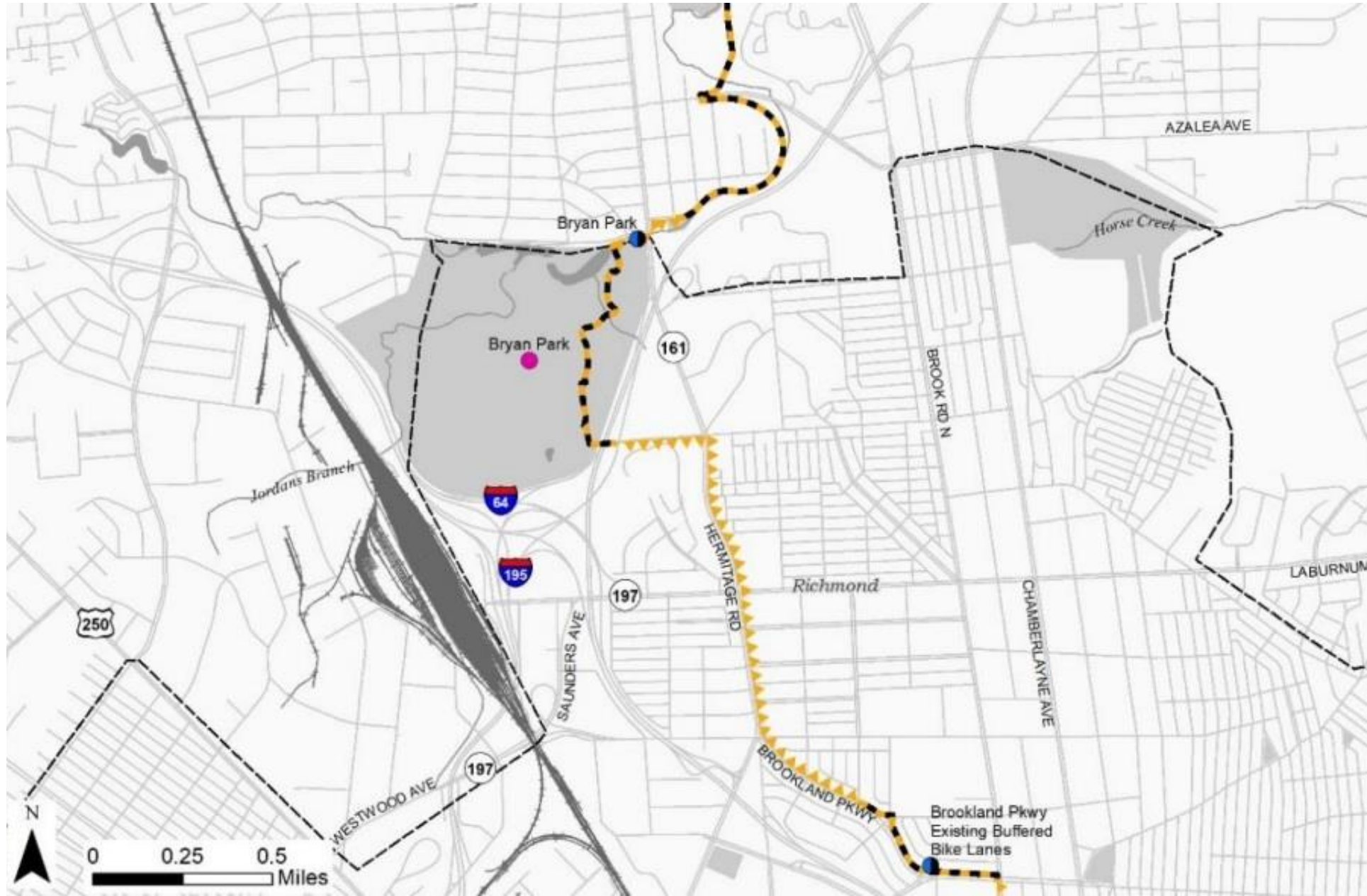






Lakeside - Northside

Credit: VDOT





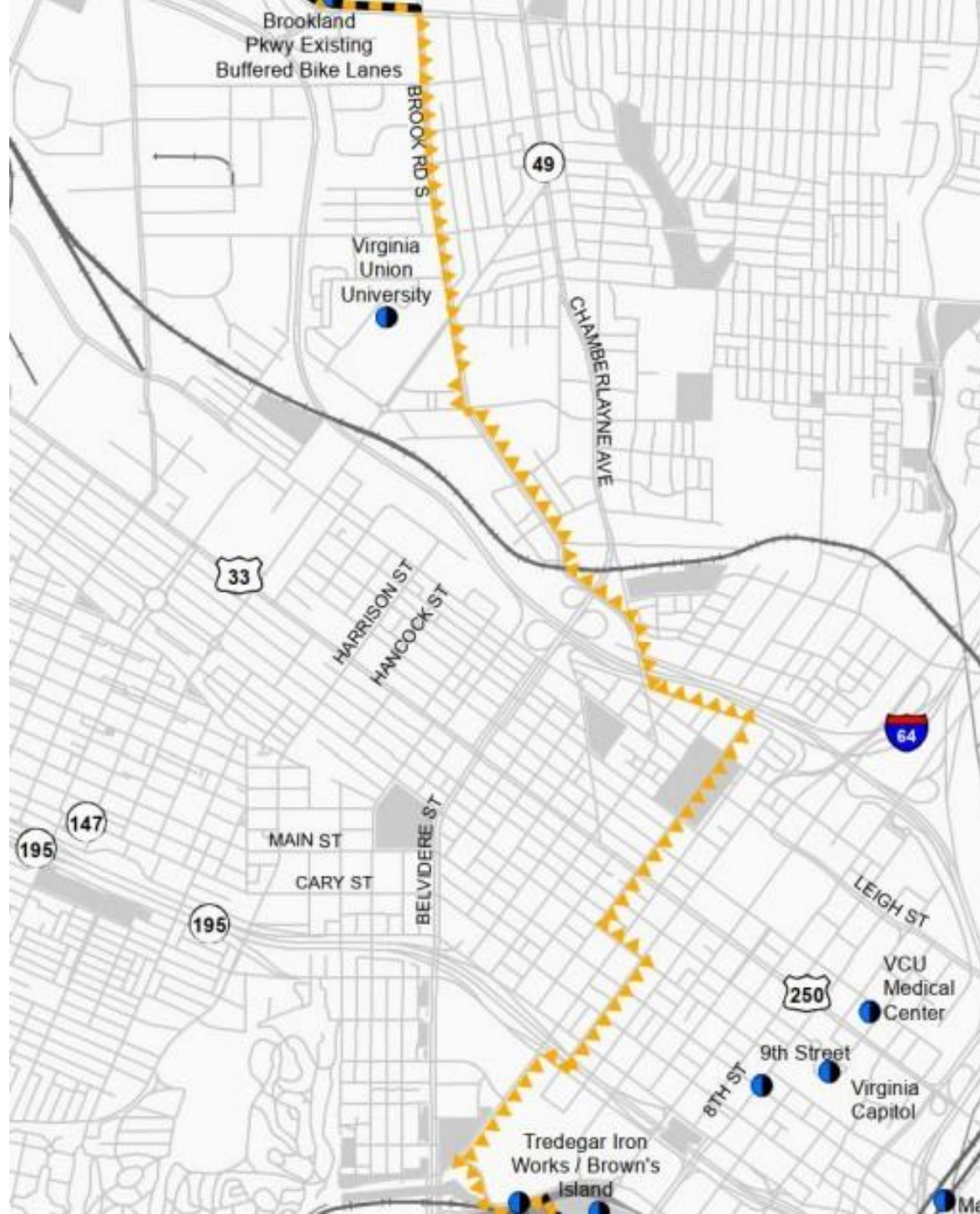
Bryan Park and Northside Richmond







Northside – Jackson Ward – Downtown





Richmond's Jackson Ward District

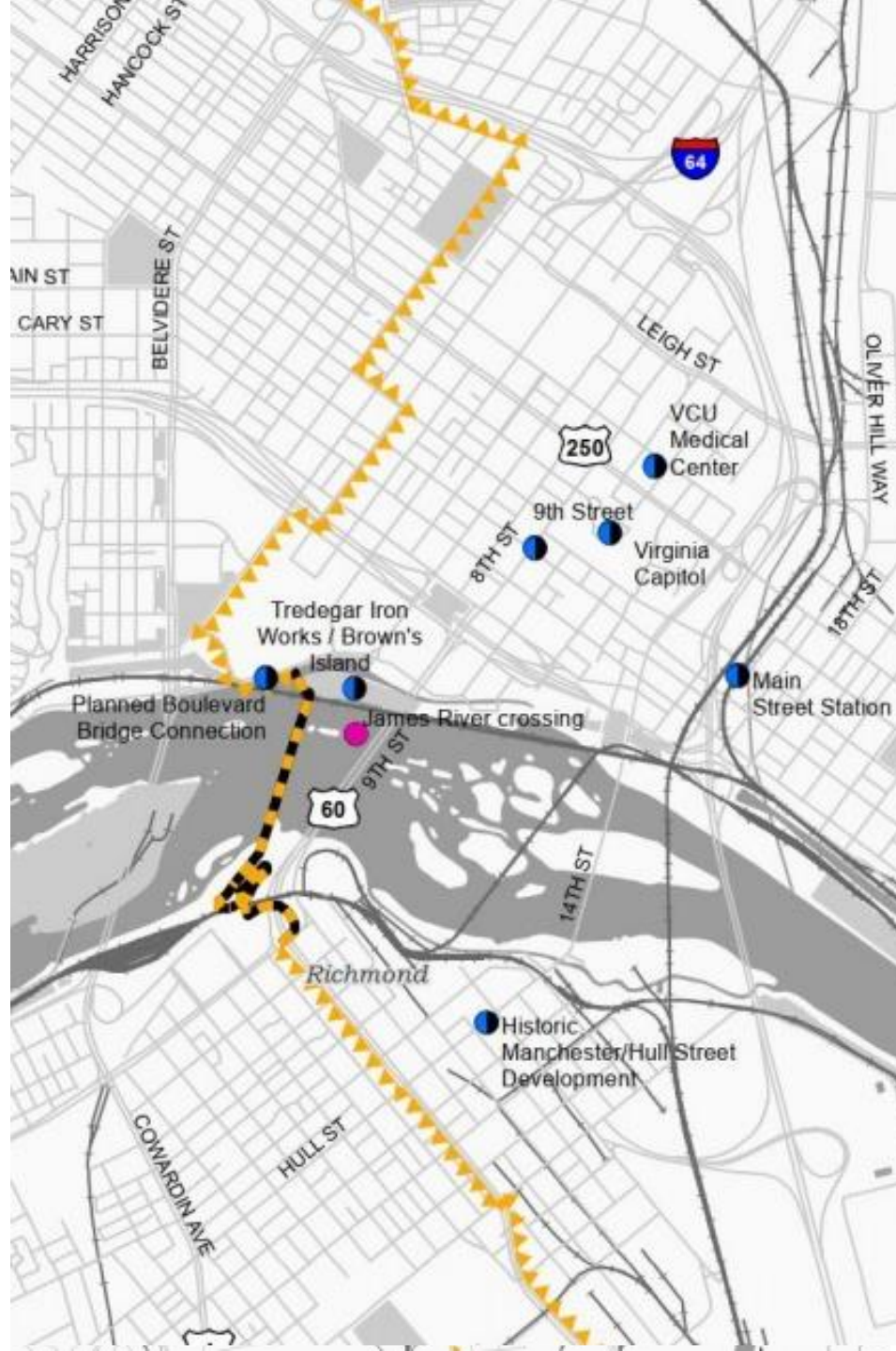




Ashland to Petersburg Trail Study

T. Tyler Potterfield Bridge

- **Would look to shift path of ECG to Potterfield Bridge, away from Belle Isle Bridge**
- **T-Pot Bridge is lit at night, unlike current route**
- **Potential for Missing Link Trail to connect to Belle Isle**



Credit: VDOT

Thank you for listening!



Chris DeWitt, AICP
Principal, VHB



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Transportation Planner, VHB



Phil Riggan
Transportation Planner
PlanRVA – Richmond PDC