



Elizabeth River Trail

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

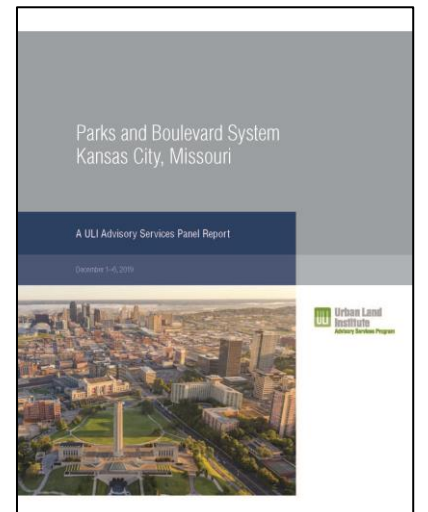
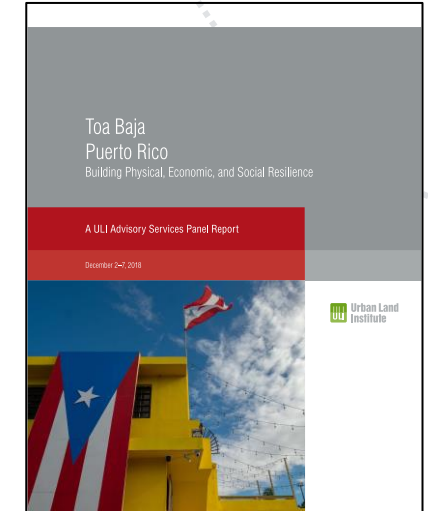
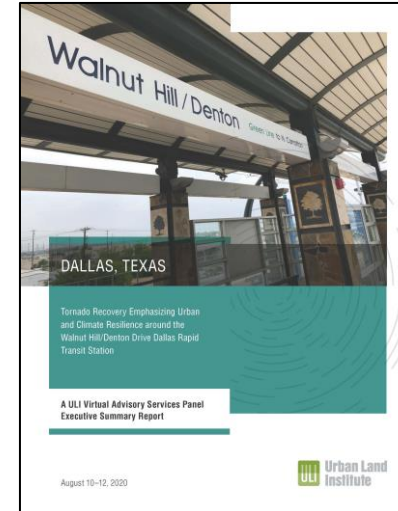
ULI VIRTUAL ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL

JULY 26 - 29, 2021

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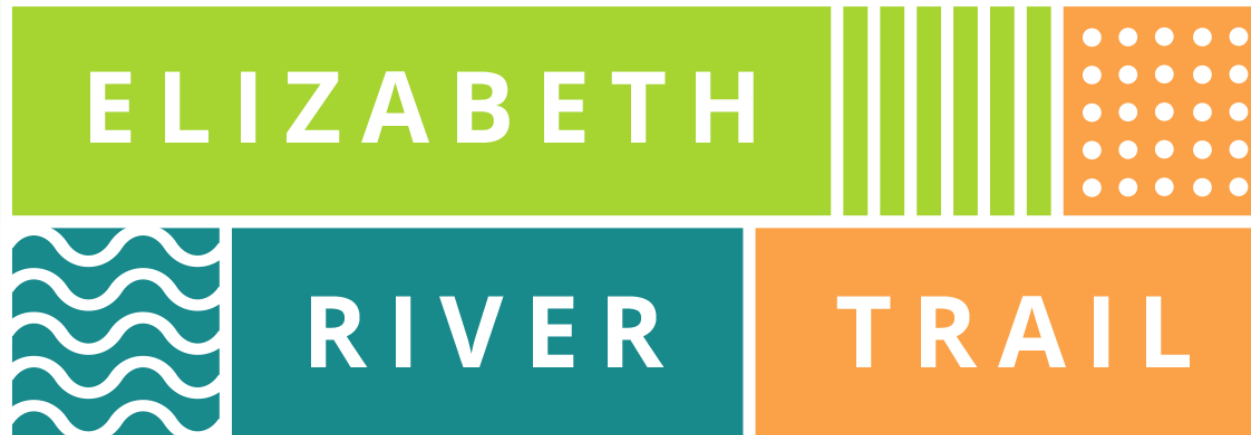


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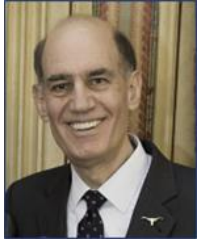
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Elizabeth River Trail, Norfolk, VA — July 2021

Selected for their subject matter expertise to provide **objective, volunteer** recommendations



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Ryan Bouma
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Urban Movement Labs
Los Angeles, CA



Rachael Griffith
Chester County Planning
Commission
West Chester, PA



Caleb Stratton
(Panel Advisor)
City of Hoboken
Hoboken, NJ

Introduction

- Purpose
 - Assess issues raised by Elizabeth River Trail Foundation (ERTF)
 - Provide ERTF with practical advice for resolving those issues
- Stakeholders:
 - ERTF
 - City of Norfolk
 - Local businesses
 - Anchor institutions
 - Civic leagues
 - Other organizations



ERTF

Panel Process

- Review briefing book and other materials prepared by ERTF
- Hear presentation and take virtual tour conducted by ERTF staff
- Conduct interviews with stakeholders
- Analyze and debate issues
- Reach agreement on conclusions and recommendations
- Prepare draft report
- Present findings and recommendations

Scope of Presentation

- Analysis of existing conditions and trends
- Guiding themes
- Responses to ERTF's questions
 - Funding for operations and maintenance
 - Coordination with City of Norfolk
 - Contribution to coastal resilience strategy
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Other recommendations
- Next steps



Analysis of Existing Conditions and Trends

- What attributes make the Elizabeth River Trail (the Trail) distinctive?
 - Access to historic, cultural, and natural resources
 - Strong support from users, public officials, civic leaders, businesses, institutions
 - ERTF's influential and active board, supported by small but resourceful staff
- What challenges does the community seek to address?
 - The Trail's physical condition - need for better maintenance and safety-oriented improvements
 - 2016 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the city lacks sufficient specificity and clarity
 - Disparity between socioeconomic characteristics of Trail users and beneficiaries, and characteristics of Norfolk's general population

Analysis of Existing Conditions and Trends (continued)

- What opportunities are available to maximize the Trail's potential?
 - Support for possible creation of Business Improvement District (BID)
 - City official authorized to solve problems and expedite projects
 - Agreement about need to update the city/ERTF MOU
 - Trail can address flooding issues
 - Support for extending the Trail eastward to serve historically African American neighborhoods

Guiding Themes

- The Trail is **more** than a trail
 - Transportation
 - Flood control
 - Economic development
 - Neighborhood vitality
- Success depends upon strong **partnerships**
 - City
 - Businesses
 - Anchor institutions
 - Other communities in Hampton Roads region
- The Trail can be a catalyst for **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)**
 - Users
 - Adjacent neighborhoods
 - ERTF board and committees

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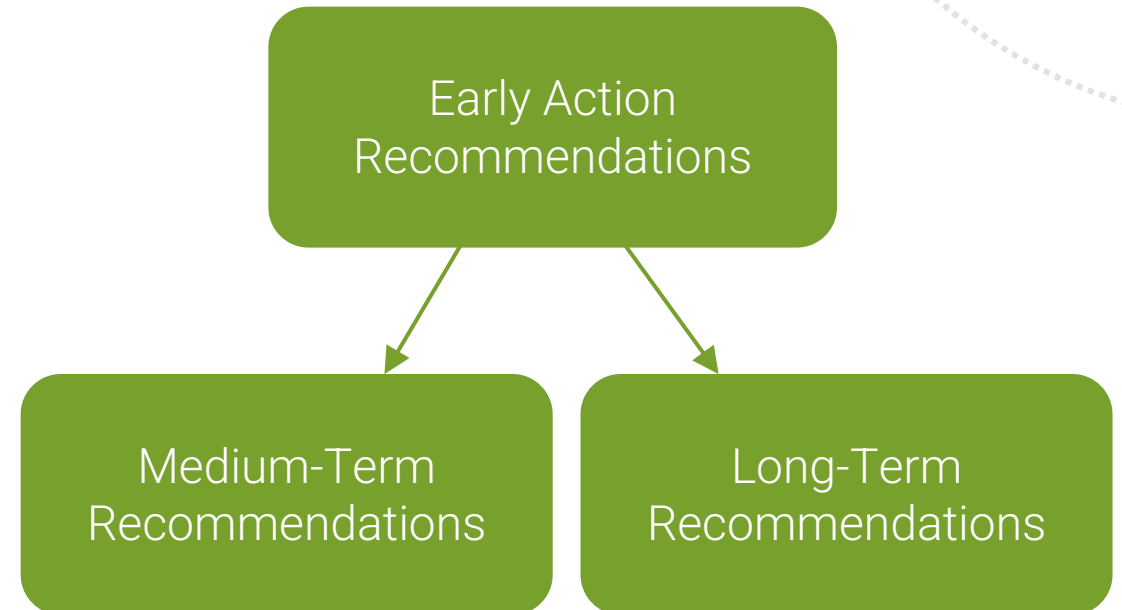


ERTF

What sustainable funding models are possible for trail operating and maintenance expenses?

Current Challenges

- Current Challenges:
 - Approx. \$775k in annual operating costs
- Current ERTF Sources of Revenue:
 - Individual donations
 - Special events
 - Project administration allowances from capital grants
 - Others
- City Contribution



Recommendations for Early Action

Within One Year

- Initiate a Friends of the Elizabeth River Trail group
- Commission an economic impact study
- Survey potential trail users
- Set the table for a BID

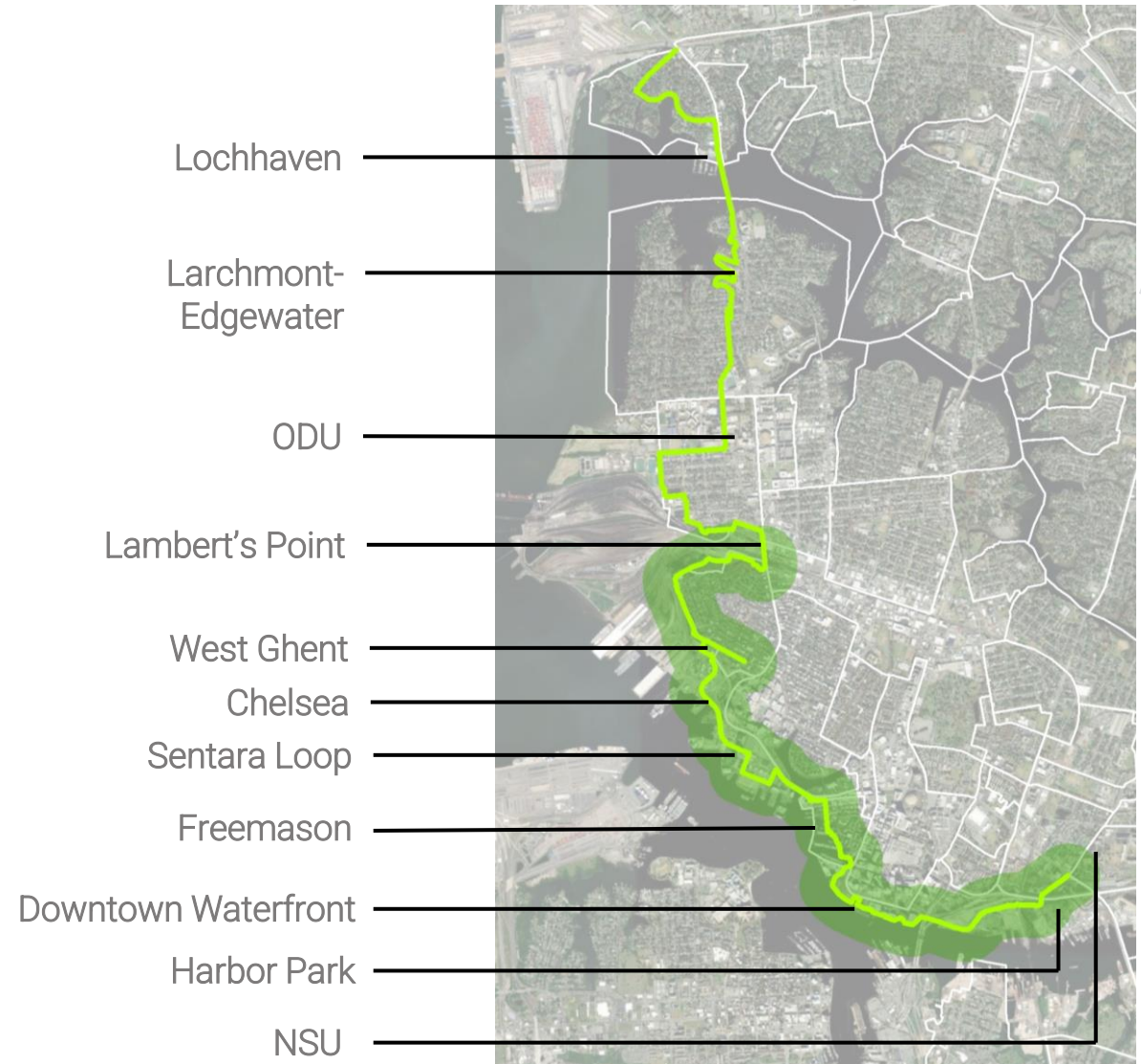


ERTF

Medium-Term Recommendations

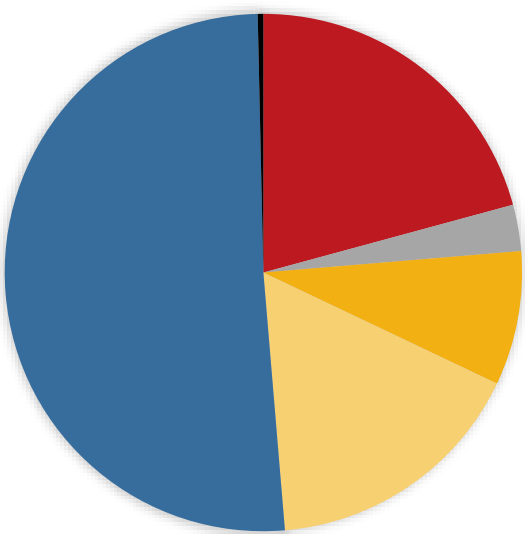
Two to Five Years

- Establish a BID within 1,000 feet of the trail
 - Approximately \$5B in assessed value, with \$1.3B assessed value of commercial properties
 - Approximately 1,100 acres



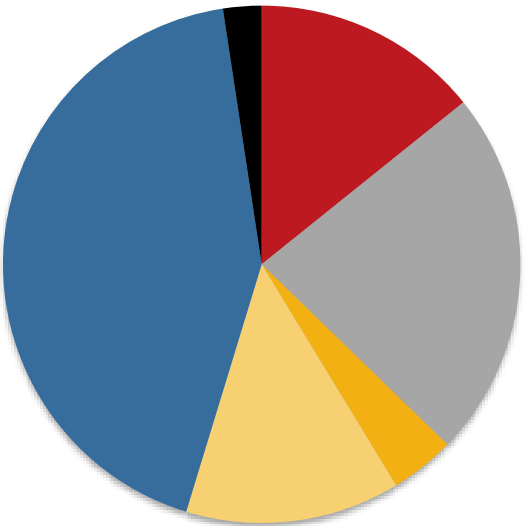
Medium-Term Recommendations

Two to Five Years



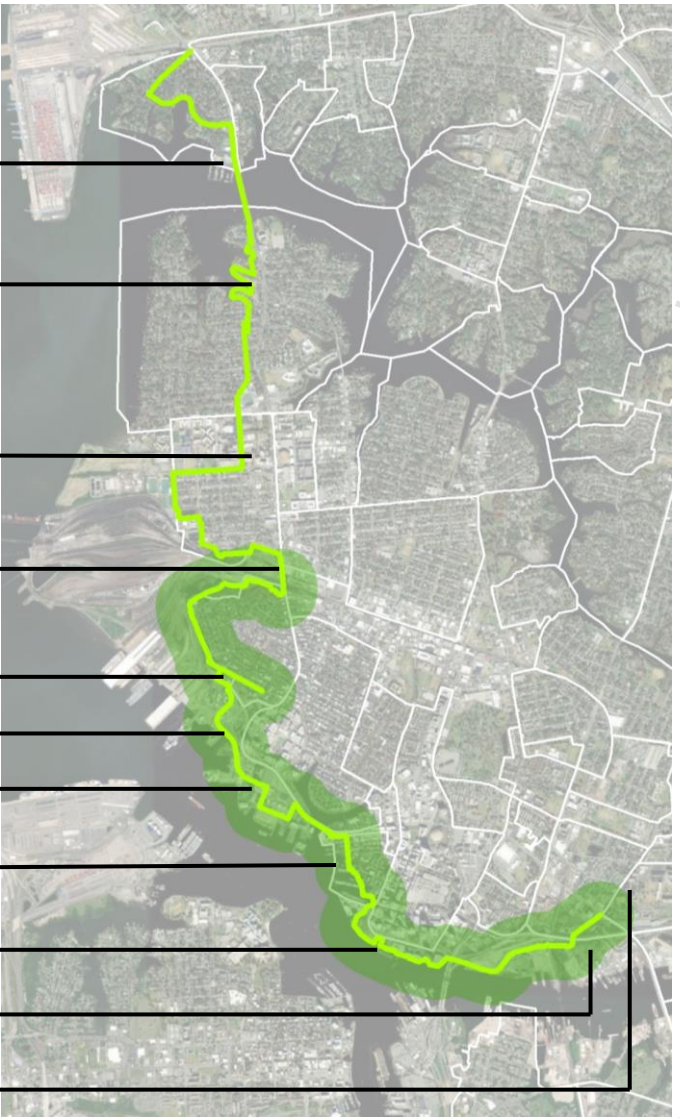
Assessed Value

- Residential
- Apartment
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Vacant



Acres

- Lochhaven
- Larchmont-Edgewater
- ODU
- Lambert's Point
- West Ghent
- Chelsea
- Sentara Loop
- Freemason
- Downtown Waterfront
- Harbor Park
- NSU



BID Specifics

- Commercial - \$840M assessed value
- Industrial - \$120M assessed value
- Apartments - \$340M assessed value
- Total Assessed Commercial Value = \$1.3B
- Potential Annual BID Revenue
 - 0.05 / \$100 assessed value = \$650,000
 - 0.10 / \$100 assessed value = \$1.3M

(For reference, Downtown BID is 0.16 mills)



Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)

- 43% of land area and 51% of total assessed value is tax-exempt
- Major institutions comprising this include:
 - Sentara Health - \$1.4B assessed value
 - Commonwealth of VA - \$68M
 - Eastern VA Medical School - \$325M
 - US Government - \$104M
- Consider establishing PILOT with these organizations to bring in additional funds for operations and maintenance

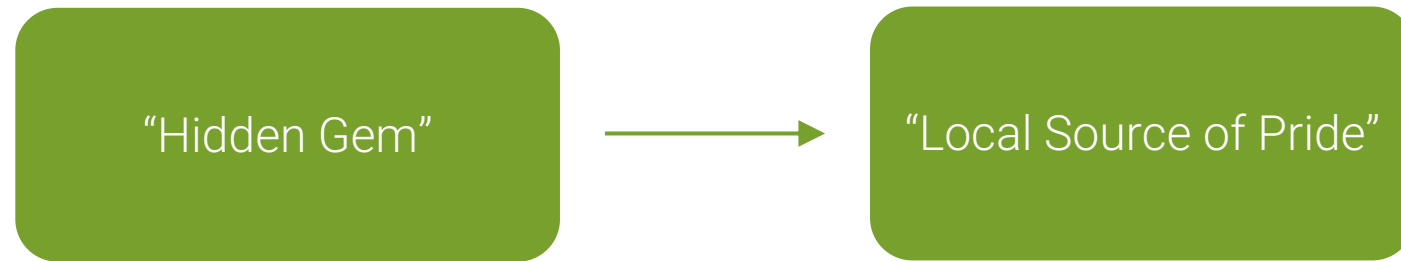
Pursue Grants for Capital Improvements

- Who should be responsible for grant writing?
- “The Trail is not just a trail”
 - Resilience funds – Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund
 - Transportation funds – Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set – Aside Program
 - Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Brownfield Remediation Fund
 - Public health and wellness
 - Public art

Long-Term Recommendations

Five Years +

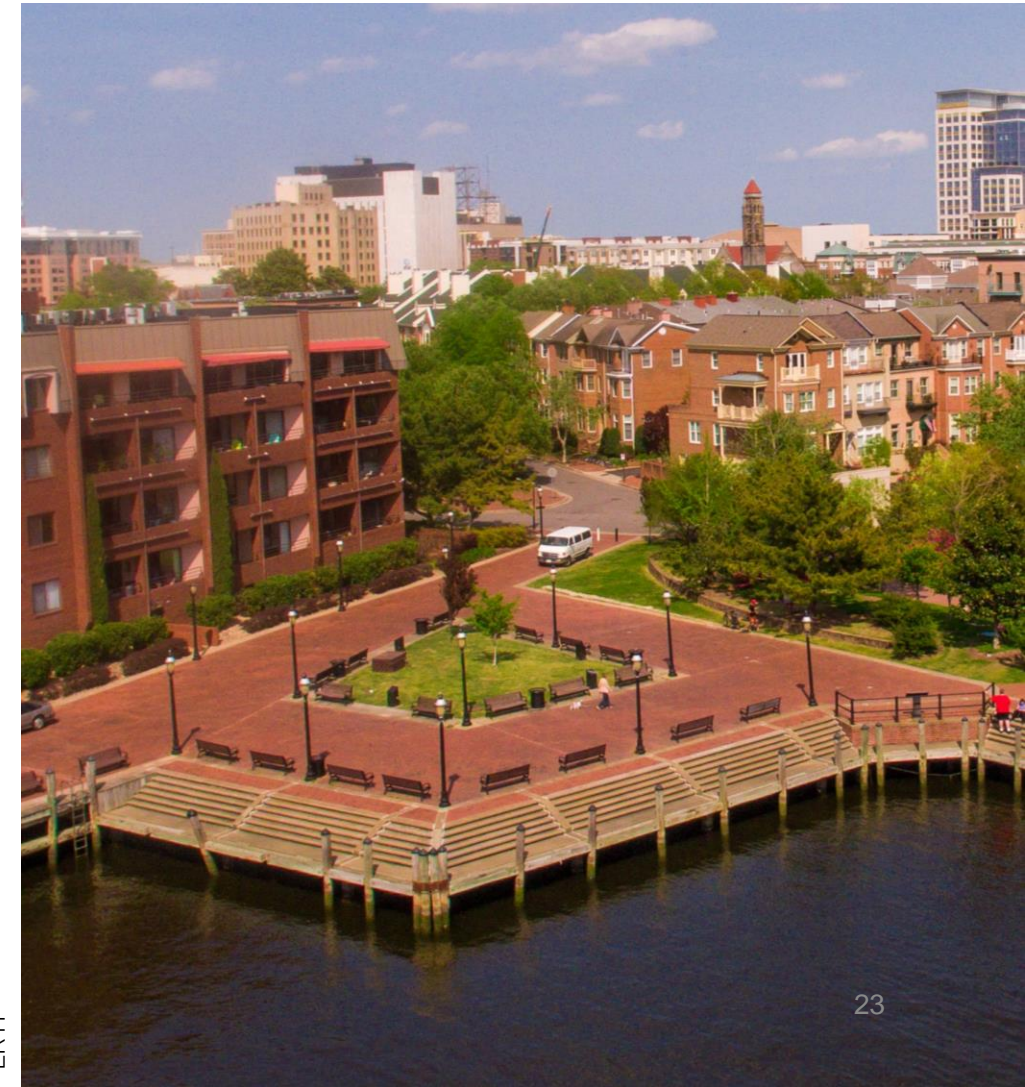
- Potential voter referendum establishing dedicated annual operating fund



How can coordination with the city be improved for future trail projects and maintenance, additions of programming or amenities and planning for future trail extensions/connections?

Coordination with the City

- Elizabeth River Trail Foundation
 - Key role in building support and identifying champions for the Trail
 - Limited bandwidth and authority to implement the vision
- City of Norfolk
 - Leverage jurisdictional authority
 - Convene stakeholders
 - Guide implementation of stakeholders
- Strategies for improved coordination
 - Reinforce the city staff champion
 - Revise the MOU
 - Establish a public right-of-way
 - Develop a master plan



Reinforce the City Staff Champion

Coordination with the city

- Why a staff champion?
 - Provide direction and direct the allocation of resources to process projects along the Trail
 - Foster data sharing between complementary departments in Norfolk
 - Communicate regularly with ERTF, community institutions, and other partner agencies
 - Validate the role of the city in the MOU

Revise the MOU

Coordination with the city

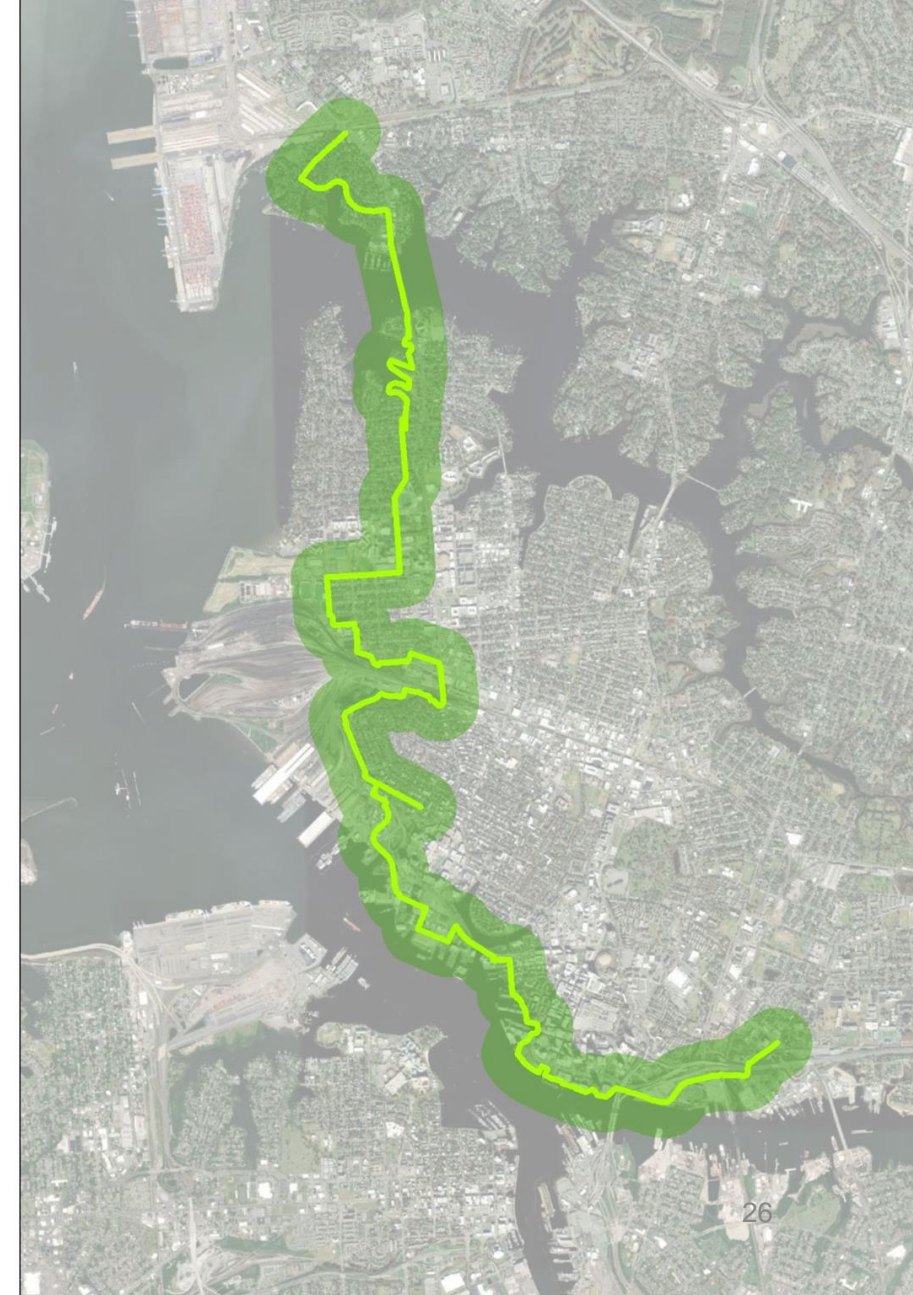
- Public Safety: *City*
 - Facility safety
 - Enforcement of traffic safety
- Maintenance: *City/ERTF*
 - City - Public ROW - road/trail conditions, landscaping, lighting
 - ERTF - Ancillary amenities - restrooms, water fountains, signage
- Development input: *City/ERTF*
 - Process for ERTF to provide input on what is to be developed if beyond standard community input process
- Programming: *City/ERTF*
 - City - Streamlined permitting process
 - ERTF - Partner coordination; Permit review support
- Budget: *City*
 - Establish administrative authority to release funds to address improvements

Establish a Public Right-of-Way

Coordination with the city

- Right-of-Way ordinance
 - Designate an official route
 - Identify up to 1,000 feet of land in each direction
 - Outline desired rules for how development in this space is managed and developed
- Process
 - Engagement with existing parcel owners
 - Work with community members to build support
- Why do this?
 - Provides justification for allocation of staff resources
 - Guides negotiations with developers to facilitate asks like:
 - Lighting
 - Landscaping
 - Maintenance support
 - Design standards (building orientation/frontage)

Elizabeth River Trail, Norfolk, VA — July



Develop a Master Plan

Coordination with the City

- Goal of Master Plan
 - Guide resources to advance trail development progress
 - Prioritize individual projects
- What would it plan for?
 - Design specifications (buildings and facilities)
 - Codify land use changes along the Trail
 - Identify facilities to connect communities to the Trail
 - Outline resilience strategies
 - Identify funding sources
- The Opportunity
 - Co-creation of a vision for the Trail with residents of all neighborhoods, ETRF, community institutions, and the city
 - Partnerships between ETRF and the city to identify funding

How can the Trail best be leveraged for coastal resilience and flood protection in its current or future alignment? How might the trail fit into Norfolk's other strategies and local investment to enhance resilience?

ERT + Flood Resilience

- The Trail can help the city adapt to its changing climate and help mitigate the extent of that change
- Segments of the Trail, and their surrounding spaces, are well located to intercept rising river levels and capture rainfall



Norfolk is Vulnerable

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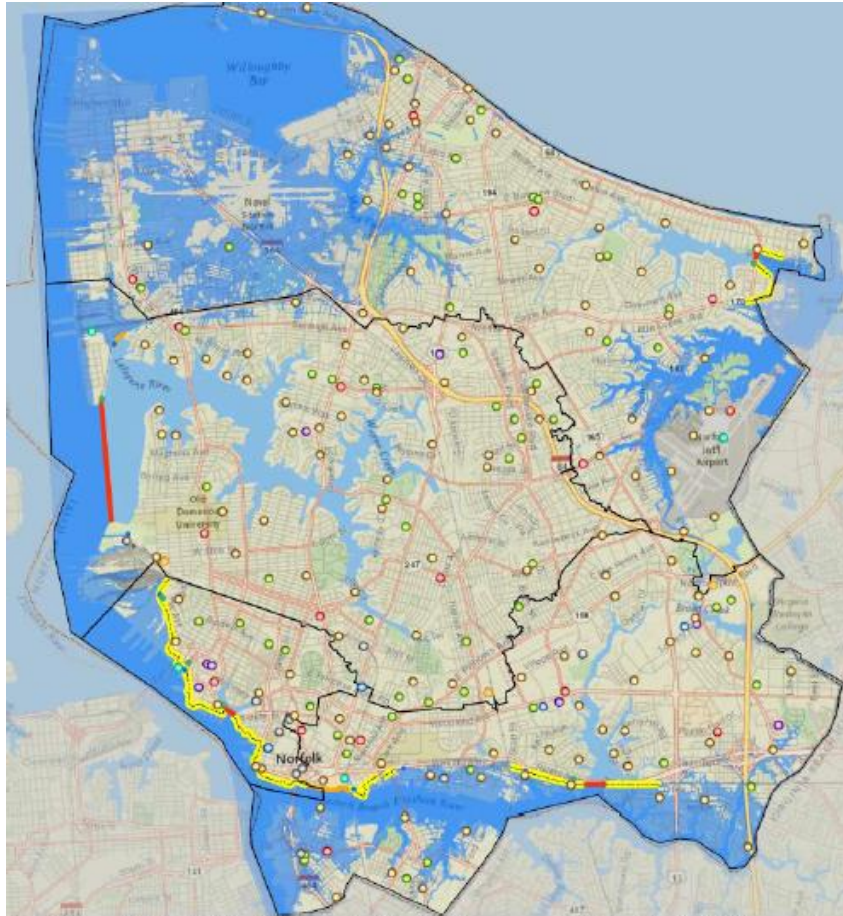
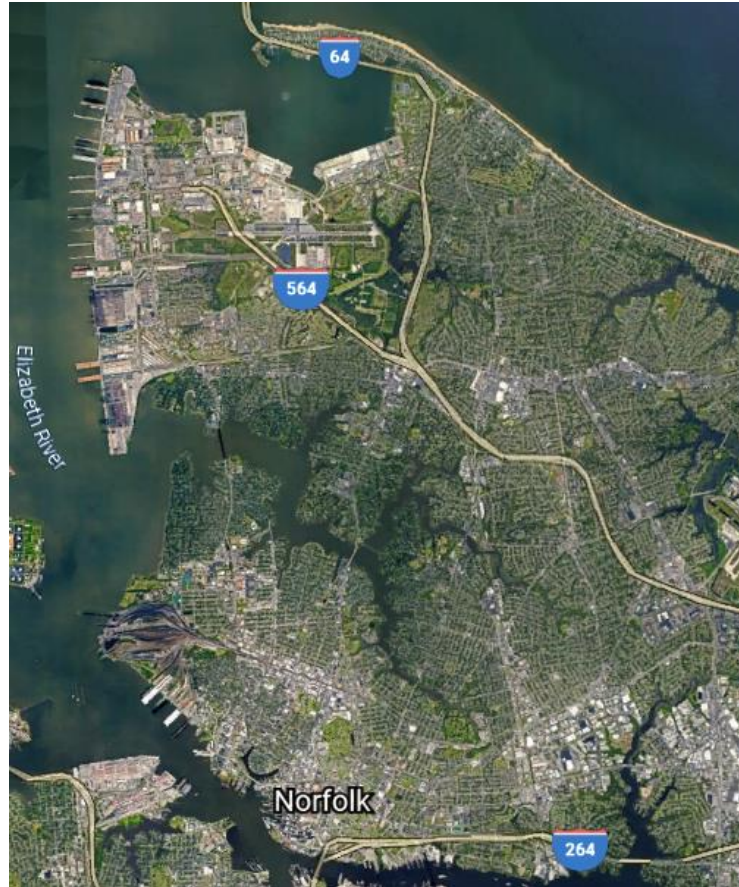


Figure 5.5. 1.4% Flood (70 year) with the Recommended Plan Project Alignment

Diagram depicting locations of USACE recommended flood barriers along the Elizabeth River. Source: USACE Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management Study (CSRMS) Appendix B June, 2018. Pg. 30



Current conditions in Norfolk, Virginia. Source: Google Earth, taken July 28, 2021.

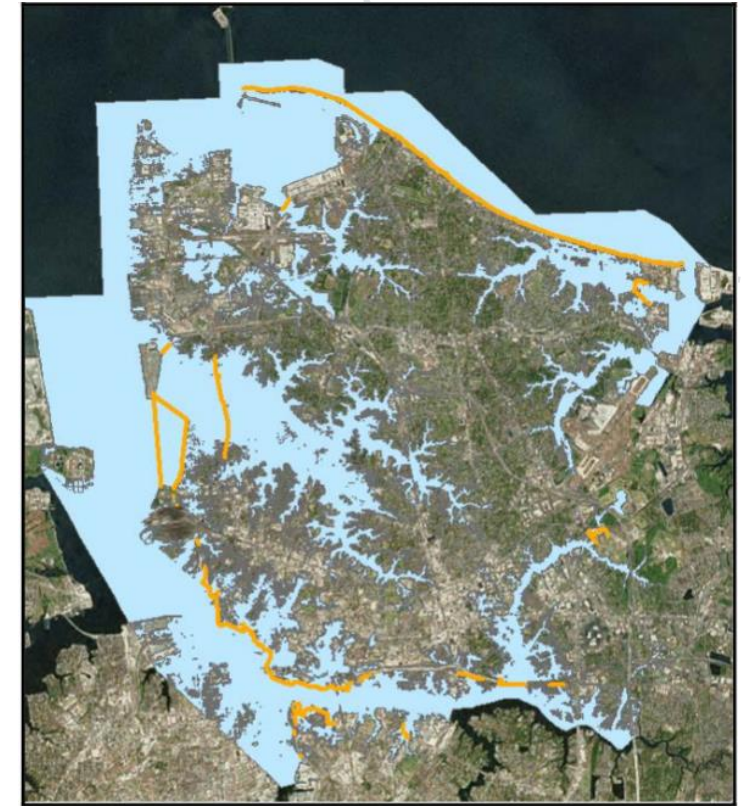
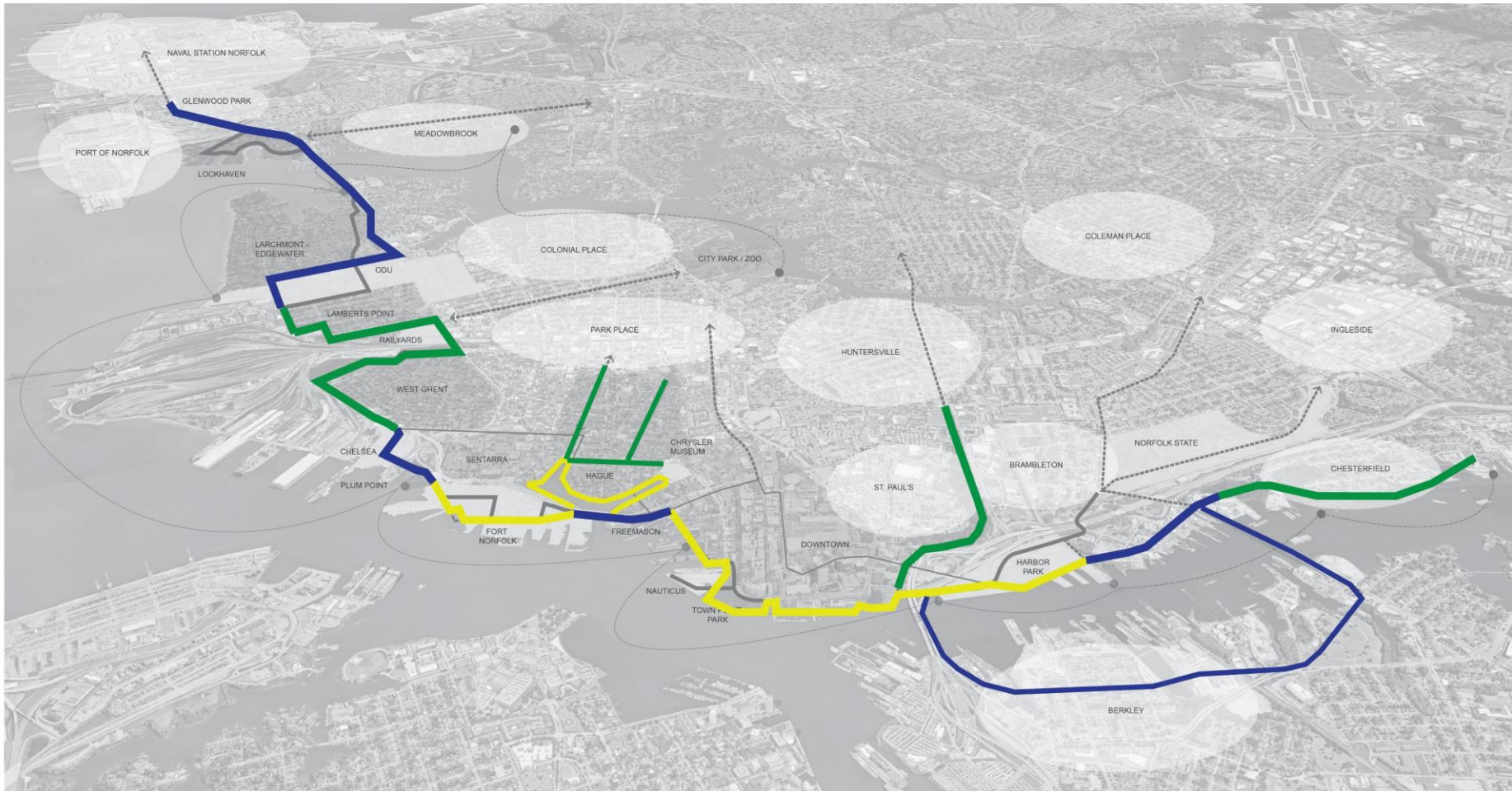


Figure 5.2. 10% Flood (10 year) Project Alignment

Source: USACE Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management Study (CSRMS) Appendix B June, 2018. Pg. 27.

ERT + Flood Resilience

- TRAIL SEGMENTS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY FUNCTION AS A 'BRIDGE' [CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CRITICAL DESTINATIONS DURING FLOOD EVENTS]
- TRAIL SEGMENTS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY FUNCTION AS AN 'ELEVATED SHORELINE' [AN EMBANKMENT THAT KEEPS FLOOD WATERS AWAY FROM VULNERABLE PROPERTY AND INFRASTRUCTURE]
- TRAIL SEGMENTS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY FUNCTION AS A 'SPONGE' [A SERIES OF COASTAL OR INTERIOR WETLANDS THAT INTERCEPT, STORE AND FILTER FLOOD WATER]



Segments of the Trail can each play different roles in a comprehensive Resilience strategy. The suggestions in this diagram are preliminary and require more in-depth analysis and validation to determine their viability.

As an 'Elevated Shoreline'

The Trail can be elevated to create a new 'activated barrier protecting property further inland



Richmond British Columbia

SOURCE: AECOM

As an 'Elevated Shoreline'

The Trail can be elevated to create a new barrier protecting property further inland



Alexandria, VA



Richmond British Columbia

SOURCE: AECOM

As a 'Sponge'

The Trail can soak up rainfall and create a shoreline buffer for wave action



Gold Coast Australia



Kissimmee, FL

As a 'Bridge'

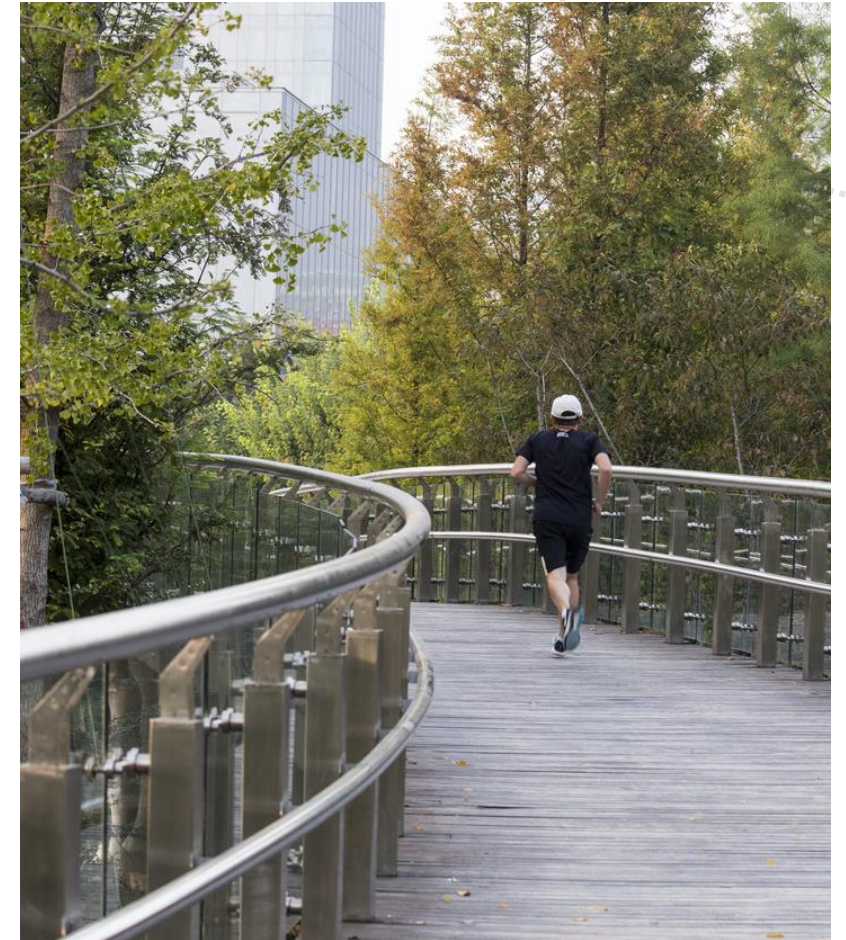
The Trail can become a safe route during flood events connecting neighborhoods with emergency services and/or critical destinations



Philadelphia, PA



Philadelphia, PA



Qingdao, China

SOURCE: AECOM

As a 'Storyteller'

The Trail can include interactive art and interpretive elements that raise awareness of the ways Norfolk is adapting to a changing climate



SOURCE: AECOM

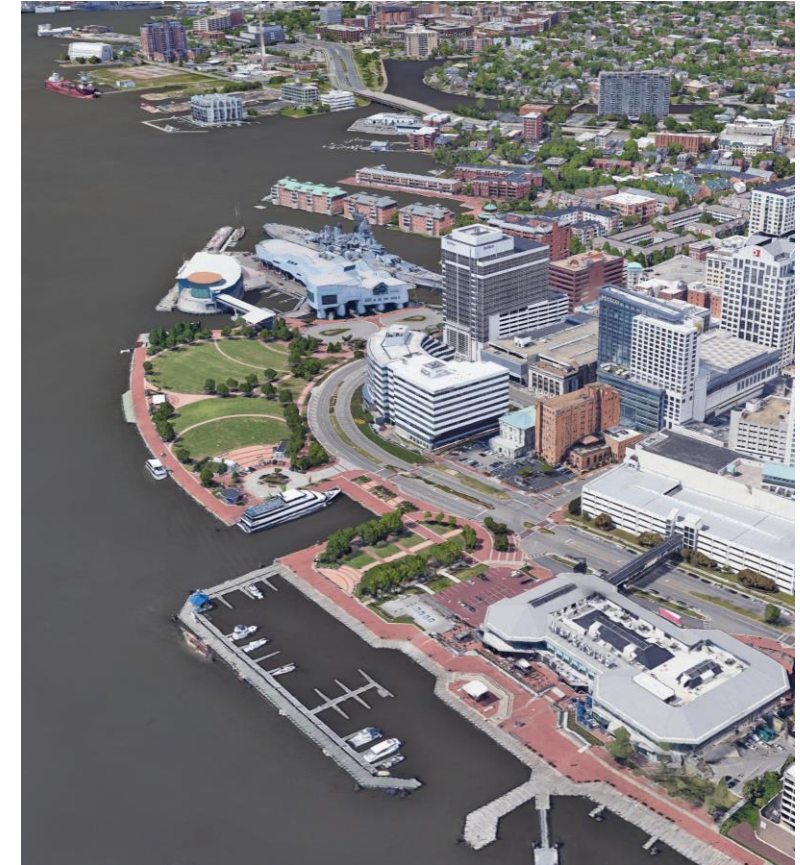
Richmond British Columbia



Cleveland, OH

Recommendations + Considerations

- **Create a baseline assessment** of the Trail conditions (based on adjacencies and right-of-way width) and overlay of the inundation vulnerability at key years and topography to determine how much trail elevation is needed in key segments to address flood risk
- **Be clear to the city of Norfolk, USACE, and the community** that the Trail is a critical location for flood risk reduction interventions
- **Focus investments** first where there is a combination of highest benefit, high visibility, and low cost so the Trail can quickly prove its resilience value to residents and decision makers
- **Keep projects simple** with an emphasis on new and expanded trail connectivity. The first benefit of The Trail is being a contiguous trail
- **Bundle issues and look for critical intersections** where several challenges can be addressed simultaneously by one project



Google Earth

How can the trail become a diverse, equitable and inclusive community asset to also enhance neighborhood and economic resilience?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Make the Trail a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community asset to also enhance neighborhood and economic resilience reflecting the larger city and region



- Build on the city of Norfolk DEI initiative
 - “The city of Norfolk is at the heart of the Hampton Roads region. A 400-year-old community that grew up along the waterfront is now home to roughly 247,000 residents. The world’s largest naval station, NATO’s North American headquarters and four college and universities thrive within our borders. Our population is diverse”
 - “To reflect our diversity and to champion equity and inclusion in city services and programs, Norfolk is the first city in Hampton Roads to launch a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Establish a DEI committee as part of the ERTF Board



- Establish a committee chair and committee members
- Committee can help to expand Trail participation to communities of color that currently are less represented
- Ensure ERTF is focusing on DEI in trail activities and planned future extensions
- Establish goals and objectives for the ERTF to support the DEI initiative



(Potential) Future Connections




	DESTINATIONS CONNECTED CURRENTLY		CURRENT TRAIL ALIGNMENT		POTENTIAL TRAIL EXTENSIONS
	NEIGHBORHOODS CONNECTED CURRENTLY		CURRENT BLUE-WAY ALIGNMENT		POTENTIAL BLUEWAY EXTENSIONS
	CONNECTED SIGNATURE PUBLIC SPACE				

The suggestions in this diagram were inspired by stakeholder engagement during the panel. This diagram is intended to show how Trail 'tributaries' can connect more neighborhoods to trail experiences in general. They are preliminary and require more in-depth analysis and revision through an inclusive public process to determine the best routes for Trail expansion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Conduct survey and focus on new connections to expand the Trail to communities of color

ARLINGTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SURVEY



**Share your opinions and help us improve
Arlington County's transportation system.**

Se hace disponible esta encuesta en español. Si prefiere usted participar utilizando esta versión, favor de visitar www.ARL-TravelSurvey.com y entre uno de las contraseñas que se escribe aquí.


Arlington County is conducting a survey of County residents about transportation issues and services and would like to include your household in the survey. Your answers will be completely confidential.

To participate in the survey, please go to the website shown below and enter either one of the **PASSWORDS** shown below. If there is another person 18 years or older in your household, they may use the second **PASSWORD** to participate in the survey.

Go to: www.ARL-TravelSurvey.com

PASSWORD	PASSWORD

If you are unable to take the survey via the Internet website, please call 1-888-274-7838, toll-free, to arrange a time to complete the survey by telephone. Wherever possible, Arlington County will make available this written information/survey in accessible formats to individuals with disabilities upon request.



Respond by
JUN 14

- Conduct survey of potential and future Trail users to gauge interest in enhanced access to the Trail
- Pursue Trail connections that align with survey results
 - Pursue connection to Norfolk State University
 - Develop relationships with the neighborhoods that show interest in a Trail connection
 - Implement activities and programs that proactively work with these communities to build awareness, interest, and buy-in to the trail connection

<https://transportation.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2021/06/Arl-Co-HTS-Postcard-2021.jpg>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Events and educational programming focused on DEI



- Connection of Trail to Healthy Norfolk
 - Build on proximity and engagement of Sentara to have programs that directly engage health professionals with communities of color along the Trail as part of a healthy walking or other exercise program
 - Encourage the city of Norfolk to join the 10-Minute Walk Movement (<https://10minutewalk.org>). The Movement seeks to ensure 100% of everyone in the city has safe access to a quality park. The Trail is a key building block to achieve that goal.

<https://10minutewalk.org/>

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Events and educational programming focused on DEI

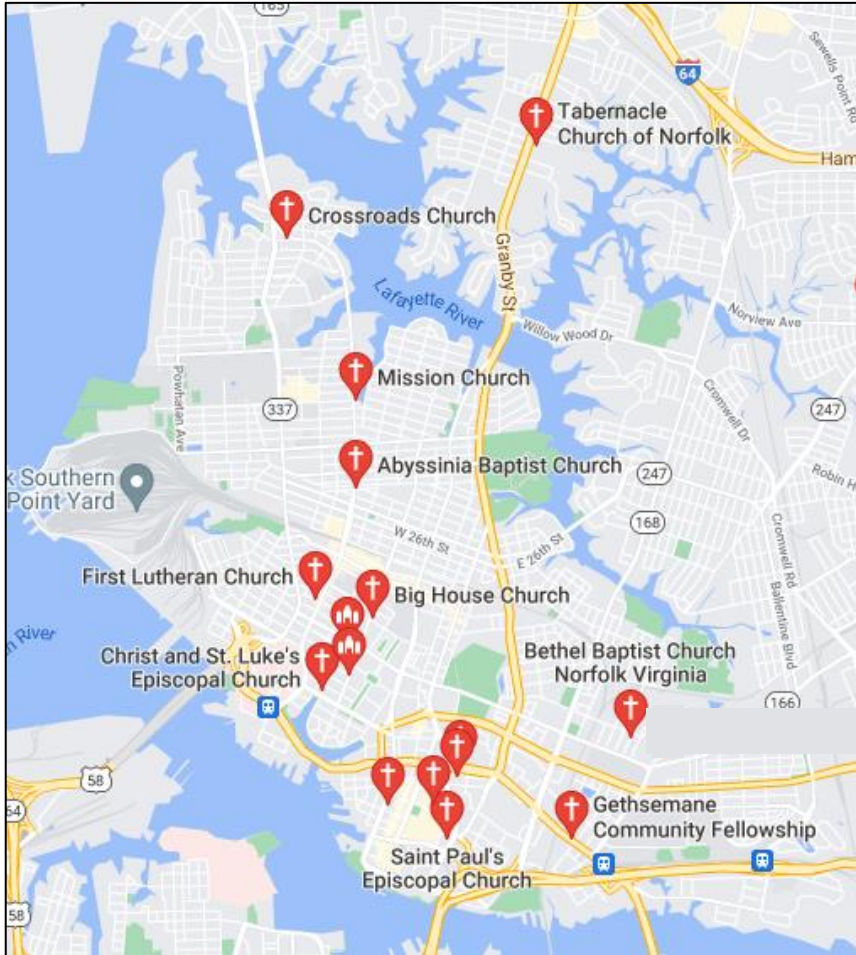


© PHOTO BY PHOENIX BIKES

- Biking and Supporting Younger Bikers
 - Phoenix Bikes is a program that is focused on supporting younger people in learning to bike and building community
 - Phoenix Bikes has two main program activities
 - Teaching 12- to 17-year-olds how to fix bikes with the opportunity to earn a bike as part of their training
 - Operating a community bike shop that sells refurbished bikes
- Bike Mentorship
 - Establish a Bike Mentorship program
- Sponsor other events and activities with a focus on DEI

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Partnerships



Source google maps

- Local houses of worship
 - Connect with communities of color and leverage other ongoing programs is to reach out to local houses of worship
 - Opportunity to invite members to activities, encourage involvement, and spread the word
- Local schools
 - Connecting with interested, younger riders to engage in training or mentorship
 - Engage universities along the Trail
- Minority owned businesses
 - Highlight benefits of locating along the trail
 - Connection and overlay of the Norfolk Innovation Corridor (NIC)
 - Collaborate with Downtown BID and Downtown Norfolk Council and others

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Other Recommendations

Revisit the Mission and Vision

- **Current mission:** To provide planning, fundraising, marketing, and volunteer recruitment/coordination to activate and enhance the Trail. Our goal is to generate public support to create a world-class asset that is a source of local pride.
- **Current vision:** To create the most iconic, urban riverfront trail in the nation.



Changing Public Perception

- Goal: Building support for the trail across neighborhood boundaries and create a vision that speaks to all community members
- Questions to ask:
 - What are the current perceptions of the trail?
 - How can the trail support your community?
 - How can the trail meet mobility, recreational, and other needs?
 - What concerns have been expressed that are associated with the impacts of development along the trail in different communities?
- How to engage?
 - Surveys (online, in person, on buses, at community events, etc.)
 - Meeting community members where they are and sharing information
 - Engage trusted community voices as ambassadors

Elizabeth River Trail, Norfolk, VA – July 2021

Next Steps

Next steps

- **Short-Term: Year 1**
 - ERTF updates its strategic plan
 - Conduct feasibility study on creation of BID
 - Update city/ERTF MOU
 - Prepare and adopt trail ordinance
 - Prepare assessment of how the Trail could contribute to the city's coastal resilience strategy
 - Establish ERTF's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) committee
 - Formulate and adopt long-range master plan for the Trail

Next steps (continued)

- **Mid-Term: Years 2-4**
 - City creates BID
 - Extend the Trail into high-priority underserved neighborhoods
- **Long-Term: Year 5 and beyond**
 - Extend Trail to Naval Station Norfolk and Virginia Beach, eventually linking South Hampton Roads Trail, Birthplace of America Trail, East Coast Greenway

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Q&A

Thank you!

<https://americas.uli.org/programs/advisory-services/>