

Presentations/Reports

Funding Assistance Requested by the City of Fredericksburg for the Virginia Central Railway Trail Hazel Run Bridge Project

July 9, 2019

Board of Supervisors

Request and Current Conditions

- On June 19, 2019, County Administration received a request from the City of Fredericksburg for County funding assistance (valued at \$135,000) for a planned bicycle/ pedestrian bridge over Hazel Run;
- Bridge project part of the City's portion of the VCR Trail within 100' of the County line;
- The VCR Trail has been recognized in the Spotsylvania Trailways Master Plan, Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, Virginia Outdoors Plan;
- The Trail is used by residents of the County (Kingswood subdivision) and City (Idlewild) in this area;

Legend

- City Boundary
- WVS_Centerlines Back (12,000)
- Interstate
- US Highway
- VA Primary
- Others
- WVS_Centerlines Back (12,000)
- Interstate
- US Highway
- VA Primary
- Others
- Parcels



Title: VCR Bridge site, adjacent to Kingswood

Date: 6/25/2019

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Crossing Location



Bridge Example



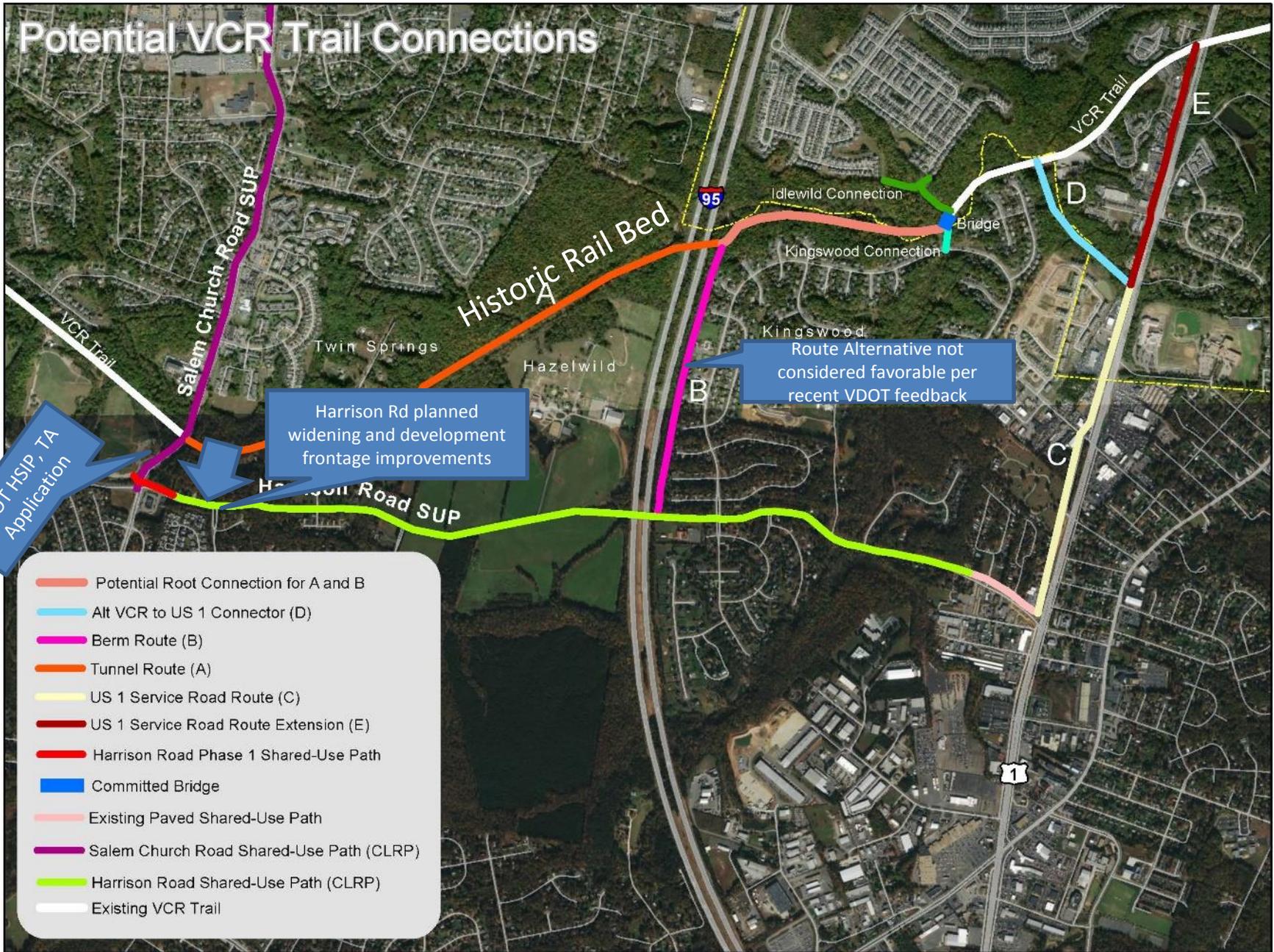
Request and Current Conditions

- Kingswood residents have no fixed access to the VCR Trail and are physically hindered by lack of a bridge and fixed connection;
- Due to lack of a connection, Kingswood residents have complained of users “trailblazing” their own routes to the path over private property.
- The City has \$160,000 “cash in hand” earmarked for this project from a Smartscale award;
- Due to steel cost increases the project now has a funding deficit (\$135,000);

Bigger Picture: VCR Trail

- No impetus to extend further west beyond this bridge project unless plans include construction of an Interstate 95 right-of-way crossing bridge or tunnel along the rail bed;
- Expected cost would be multi-millions for a bicycle/pedestrian only connection whether tunnel or bridge;
- Ability to establish a connection as part of a Harrison Road interchange project is purely speculative at this time;
- Landowners west of the Interstate have expressed concern and disinterest in utilizing the rail bed in this area;
- Harrison Road frontage improvements have been viewed more favorably paired with planned road widening and bridge replacement as a viable means to cross the Interstate;

Potential VCR Trail Connections



VDOT HSIP, TA Application

Harrison Rd planned widening and development frontage improvements

Route Alternative not considered favorable per recent VDOT feedback

- Potential Root Connection for A and B
- Alt VCR to US 1 Connector (D)
- Berm Route (B)
- Tunnel Route (A)
- US 1 Service Road Route (C)
- US 1 Service Road Route Extension (E)
- Harrison Road Phase 1 Shared-Use Path
- Committed Bridge
- Existing Paved Shared-Use Path
- Salem Church Road Shared-Use Path (CLRP)
- Harrison Road Shared-Use Path (CLRP)
- Existing VCR Trail

Findings

- Funding assistance valued at \$135,000 requested;
- The urgency of this request comes due to a soon to expire bid and increases in steel costs that have resulted in a funding gap beyond the \$160,000 already “in hand” from Smartscale funding;
- Aside from the lack of funds, because the project is otherwise “ready to go”, construction is expected to begin this summer and no additional delays are expected to result in additional funding gap concerns;
- The City has confirmed that without County participation the current project will likely be terminated and Smartscale funds lost;

Findings

- Steel costs tend to vary as a commodity and could rise further or fall in time;
- City expects additional costs to construct this project primarily due to potential loss of current bid and smartscale funding;
- Alternative funding sources such as Federal sources identified by the City will likely increase costs further due to their requirements (fine print);

Findings

- Staff believes this project to be of most value to the County if the Board is supportive of implementing a public access recreational trail along the historic rail bed extending further west to I-95 and beyond through bridge or tunnel construction;
- If not, this bridge structure chiefly benefits residents of Kingswood subdivision. The Trail would otherwise dead-end there;
- Bridge construction would benefit Kingswood residents and enhance access through a fixed private connection to the public trail system.

Source of Funding

- If the Board wishes to fund the \$135,000 request, the Finance Department recommends use of the Capital Projects Fund balance, that would require a budget adjustment to be approved by the Finance Committee and then by the Board;
- Staff notes shifting funds within the Capital Projects Fund ultimately partially defunds out-year projects in favor of more urgent short term projects. Those funds will inevitably need to be replenished to re-fund those future projects;
- No other funding options available given the short turnaround of this request.

Recommendation

- Staff would like Board direction concerning the City of Fredericksburg request to provide funding assistance for the Hazel Run Bridge Project. If the request has Board support, staff recommends sourcing the funds as recommended by the Finance Department.

Recommendation

- Staff would like to know the Board's position regarding plans to establish a bicycle/ pedestrian only tunnel or bridge crossing through the Interstate 95 right-of-way along the former rail bed to connect with the City's VCR Trail.