
Meeting #1 Minutes

Route 631 Corridor Study – Phase 1

June 12, 2019

Albemarle County Offices

In attendance:

Charles Proctor, VDOT Culpeper District	Tony Edwards, City of Charlottesville
Troy Austin, VDOT Culpeper TE	Amanda Poncy, City of Charlottesville
Adam Moore, VDOT Charlottesville Residency	Rex Linville, 5 th & Avon CAC
Kevin McDermott, Albemarle County	Chris Tiesler, Kittelson & Associates
Dan Butch, Albemarle County	Meredyth Sanders, Kittelson & Associates
Chip Boyles, TJPDC – MPO	

Welcome and Introductions

Chris Tiesler (Kittelson) welcomed the Route 631 Stakeholder Group and thanked them for attending the kick-off meeting. He introduced himself as the Project Principal for the Study Consultant Team. The project manager (Patty Hurd) was unable to attend the kick-off meeting and will attend the second stakeholder meeting. The stakeholders and remaining study team members introduced themselves.

Following the introductions, the study team provided the study stakeholders with an overview of the study and gathered stakeholder input on opportunities and challenges associated with the Route 631 corridor.

Background and Scope of Phase 1

Charles Proctor (VDOT) provided the Stakeholder Group with a synopsis of the background and scope of the Route 631 Corridor Study and its associated phases. VDOT Culpeper District identified Route 631 between Harris Street and Ambrose Commons Drive as a potential corridor study location through its

Strategically Targeted and Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) process. VDOT allocated funding for the Route 631 Study through VDOT's Transportation Planning and Mobility Division (TMPD) On-Call Contract. VDOT set up the study to include two phases. Chris Tiesler (Kittelson) explained that the first phase is underway and will focus on identifying a mutually agreed upon set of goals and a study scope for Phase 2. The second phase of the corridor study will enact the scope developed during the first phase to identify transportation alternatives that will help meet the study goals and objectives.

The stakeholders asked when the Route 631 corridor was first identified through the STARS process. Charles explained that the Route 631 corridor had been identified a few years prior.

Schedule, Milestones, and Assumptions

Chris Tiesler provided an overview of the two-month Phase 1 schedule, which will go through the end of July 2019. Phase 1 is in its first two tasks (What are the issues, opportunities, and objectives?; What does the data tell us?), which will conclude at the end of June 2019. The first two tasks for Phase 1 involve data gathering, identifying issues and opportunities, and conducting an existing conditions assessment for the corridor. The third task will involve identifying and refining draft goals, objectives, and a scope for Phase 2. A second stakeholder meeting will be held during the third task to review findings from the existing conditions assessment, provide feedback on the draft study goals, objectives, and scope. The second stakeholder meeting will be held in mid-July and the third task is scheduled to conclude at the end of July 2019.

Phase 2 of the Route 631 study is scheduled to start at the beginning of August 2019 and is expected to conclude within around seven (7) to nine (9) months.

Who uses the Route 631 corridor today? Is it serving them? Who will use it in the future? How will it serve them?

The study team provided a map of the Route 631 corridor and asked the stakeholders to share insights about opportunities and challenges along the study corridor. The stakeholder shared the following insights:

Areas of Concern and Challenges

- The corridor experiences safety challenges related to sight distance, turning movements, intersections, and a lack of active transportation facilities.
 - Anecdotally, motorists are observed making U-turns at unsafe locations along the corridor, such as Sunset Avenue and 5th Street Station Marketplace.
 - The Covenant School (private) has to hire two police officers to direct traffic during the weekday A.M. peak to facilitate safe, effective turning in and out of the Covenant School access (Oak Hill Drive).
 - The stakeholder group highlighted Old Lynchburg Road as a common crash location on the corridor.

- The I-64 interchange on 5th street experiences operational challenges today and is forecast to continue to experience issues in the future. Queues anecdotally back up past turn lanes at the interchange today, and ramp signals are projected to fail based on findings from the recent Southwood TIA.
- The corridor lacks crossing opportunities for non-motorized users south of Harris Street. Anecdotally, transit riders cross 5th Street midblock to access CAT stops.
- Current bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on the Route 631 corridor is absent or narrow at many locations along the corridor.
- Anecdotally, the two signalized intersections on 5th Street Station Marketplace experience long queues and delay.

Opportunities

- Route 631 is an important transit corridor connecting the neighborhoods adjoining the corridor with the City of Charlottesville.
- Several mixed and low-income housing developments are in the pipeline on the study corridor. This study provides an opportunity to provide access to diverse modes of transportation to future corridor residents.
- Several major existing and planned trail facilities run parallel to the corridor, including Moore's Creek Trail Corridor and planned access to Biscuit Run State Park. This study presents opportunities to connect to trails and provide vital crossing points for non-motorized east-west travel.
 - Albemarle County has secured a proffer for a new sidewalk, trail upgrades and trail parking for the Moore's Creek Trail Corridor just south of the I-64 interchange.
 - Oak Hill Drive is an existing Biscuit Run trail head connection to Route 631.
 - Planned project to rebuilt Moore's Creek bridge as a pedestrian bridge will provide an additional connection to parallel, off-corridor trail facilities.
- An eventual redesign of the I-64 interchange on 5th street can improve operations and access for motorized and non-motorized modes of transportation. The study team will work to identify additional near- to mid-term options to enhance bicycle and pedestrian crossing comfort at the interchange.
 - Pavement condition and maintenance at the interchange serve as a helpful short-term solution to improving interchange operations.
- Super street concepts (i.e., RCUTS) may improve operations and safety at key locations along the corridor.
- Roundabouts may improve operations and safety at key locations along the corridor. The stakeholder group discussed the role of roundabouts in modifying the geometric character of roadways to discourage speeding and encourage attentive driving.
- 5th Street south of Sunset Avenue may be eligible for a road diet, increasing opportunities to implement effective roundabouts and crossing treatments on the corridor.
- Wider bicycle and pedestrian facilities could improve access and comfort for nonmotorized users along the corridor.

- Ongoing and upcoming developments along the corridor present an opportunity to for Albemarle County to proffer financial support for specific study recommendations (e.g. Royal Fern development).

Discuss Goal Categories

The study team requested stakeholder feedback on draft study goal categories for Phase 2 of the study:

1. Auto Safety/Mobility
2. Transit Safety/Mobility
3. Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety/Mobility
4. Economic Development and Redevelopment
5. Sustainability and Health

The stakeholder group provided the following constructive feedback on the draft study goal categories:

- Combine the auto, transit, and bicycle and pedestrian goal categories into one “Complete Streets” goal category. This category will succinctly encompass mobility, safety, access, and comfort goals and objectives for all modes.
- Update sustainability and health goal category to be an “Environmental Sustainability and Health” goal category.
- Focus on “economic development”, not “redevelopment” in the economic development goal category.
- Incorporate the concept of equity into the draft goals and objectives for all goal categories.

Next Steps

Throughout the meeting, Meredyth Sanders (Kittelton) asked the stakeholders about providing additional datasets and plans that will inform the Phase 1 existing conditions assessment. The stakeholder group committed to sharing the following additional datasets following the stakeholder meeting:

- Detailed crash reports [FR-300s]
 - To be provided by VDOT
 - Kittelson to provide VDOT with a list of Document Numbers for crashes that have occurred along the corridor within the past five years
- Signal timing for I-64 Interchange
 - To be provided by VDOT
- Albemarle County bicycle, pedestrian, and trail plan GIS files
 - To be provided by Albemarle County

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- Transportation Impact Analyses for the following in-process development projects: Southwood, Royal Fern, Brookdale, and Timberland
 - To be provided by Albemarle County
 - Signal timing for Harris Street and 5th Street Extended, 5th Street Station Marketplace and 5th Street Extended, and 5th Street Station Marketplace and 5th Street Station Marketplace.
 - To be provided by the City of Charlottesville

During the meeting, Chris Tiesler asked the stakeholder group if any additional stakeholders should be included in the project moving forward. The stakeholder group provided the following feedback:

- Habitat for Humanity representative for the Southwood development
- Albemarle County Emergency Services (Police) representative
- Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) representative

Chris thanked everyone for attending and reminded them that the next stakeholder meeting will be scheduled to occur sometime in mid-July 2019. He noted that the study team would bring a summary of the existing conditions assessment, draft goals and objectives, and a draft scope for Phase 2 for discussion at the next stakeholder meeting.

Attachments: Study Schedules

Cc: Stakeholders, Meeting Attendees