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SHOCKOE VALLEY STREETS IMPROVEMENTS

Urban Design Committee Project Narrative

Date: June 17th, 2026

The Purpose and Need of this project, as described in the NEPA Categorical Exclusion document currently under final review by the Federal Highway Administration, is to improve multimodal safety, mobility, and circulation. The improvements are needed because of poor bicycle and pedestrian route connectivity along with numerous conflict points in the project area for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The Shockoe Valley Streets Improvement Project consists of numerous transportation improvements to the area between E Broad Street and Leigh Street and Oliver Hill Way to Mosby Street. The project converts Oliver Hill Way and 18th Street from one-way to two-way streets. Traffic calming and landscaped roundabouts will replace four traditional intersections at Oliver Hill Way and Venable Street, 18th Street and Venable Street, Mosby Street and Venable Street, and Leigh Street and Mosby Street. A new, upgraded signal at Broad Street and Oliver Hill Way will be installed and will provide vehicular and pedestrian phases. Streetscape improvements throughout the project include street trees and decorative lighting. The project will include the installation of shared use paths, cycle tracks and enhanced pedestrian facilities. The proposed cycle tracks provide connections to the Virginia Capital Trail to the south as well as to the Canyon Creek Greenway to the north. On-Street parking will be provided along the east side of Oliver Hill Way as part of the project, providing traffic calming and parking for nearby residences and businesses that does not exist today.

These enhancements are designed to fulfill the project goals that have been developed with community input. These goals include:

- Improving safe access for all users regardless of age or ability
- Improving circulation and connectivity within the urban street grid
- Supporting environmental sustainability through transportation options
- Supporting additional economic development opportunities
- Supporting existing and proposed land uses with multimodal, walkable street grid

The project design has evolved as we have received public input as the design has progressed. To date, there have been 34 community input opportunities including 4 City Council ordinance hearings, 5 public workshops / hearings, meetings with stakeholders, local businesses / developers and other public meetings. Several of the key design items that have evolved from this input include the elimination of the roundabout at Oliver Hill Way and Broad Street, reducing proposed right-of-way width and a new drainage system along Oliver Hill Way, and

shifting location and reduction of size of the roundabouts at Venable Street / Mosby Street as well as at Mosby Street / Leigh Street. These shifts and reductions to the roundabouts avoid impacts to Union Hill Historic District and avoid demolition of a residence within the Mosby Court property, also a historical site. Color Displays of the overall project, Oliver Hill Way, and the four roundabouts are included in appendix A.

The project has received overwhelming support from the community based on public hearing data with 93% of public believing the project improves safety, 87% believing the project enhances connectivity, and 85% believing the project improves access. The project has also received a diverse coalition of support from numerous agencies including Safe and Healthy Streets Commission, Department of Planning and Development Review, and the Department of Economic Development. The project brochure for the Design Public hearing is attached in Appendix A.

Extensive cultural resource work has been completed to progress the project through the Section 106 Review Process and to address any adverse effects. Coordination with Virginia Department of Historical Resources has taken place over the last five years. This has resulted in an effects finding and a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding mitigation measures to resolve adverse effects. A draft NEPA Categorical Exclusion is currently under agency review.

The total estimated project cost is \$49.6 million for 2025. The project is federally funded with SMART SCALE funds for \$33.3 million. The adopted FY26-FY30 approved \$14 million G.O. Bond. The adopted CVTA Regional Round 4 Proposal is requesting \$17 million CVTA regional funds. The project expenditures to date are \$4 million. Construction is set to start 2029 and finish up in 2031.

The project will improve sustainability in the area through the use of street trees and other plantings in and around the proposed roundabouts. Additionally, stormwater from increased pavement areas will be managed on-site through the use of underground detention facilities and the new sidewalks, bicycle connections and transit facilities should encourage multi-modal users of all types.

Below are comments received at the UDC Conceptual Review meeting on June 6, 2019 (*shown in blue italics*):

Provide plans for the project indicating site characteristics which including: building footprints, parking areas, pedestrian routes, recreation areas, open areas and areas of future expansion

Project plans are included in the application package. They include adjacent buildings, parking, pedestrian and bicycle routes and open areas.

Provide a landscaping plan that indicates a complete plant schedule, the precise location of all plant materials, and a landscape maintenance analysis. The plant schedule must show number, size and type of each planting proposed. If existing trees are to be removed, their size, type and location must be noted on the landscape plan

Landscaping architecture plans are provided in the plan set submitted with this application and can be found in the 25 series sheets. These provide a planting schedule of locations and species. These will be refined as comments are received from City Staff. A rendering in Appendix A shows what the three consecutive roundabouts along Venable Steet could look like. An additional rendering of the roundabout at Venable Street and Mosby Street in Appendix A gives an idea of what plantings could look like in the center island of the roundabout, however no determination has been made on landscape / hardscape within the roundabouts.

Provide the location of all lighting units, including wall-mounted, site and parking lot lighting. Other site details, such as benches, trash containers and special paving materials, should also be located. Include specification sheets will suffice

Lighting plans are provided in the plan set submitted with this application and can be found in the 24 series sheets. These provide general notes, lighting details and horizontal photometrics plan sheets for vehicular and pedestrian lighting. Upgraded transit stops will include GRTC's specified shelters and seating and any additional appurtenances meeting their current standards. Street trees will be spaced to not interfere with lighting.

Provide samples of all proposed exterior materials such as sidewalk and multi-use path materials, if samples cannot be provided, photos or specification sheets will suffice

The majority of proposed sidewalk throughout the project will be brick and will match the existing sidewalks on neighboring Shockoe streets expanding the urban feel into the project area. The shared use path will be asphalt and curb ramps will be concrete. A rendering of Oliver Hill Way is attached in Appendix A to demonstrate what a typical section looking down Oliver Hill Way at Clay Street would appear as. This rendering gives an idea of what the cycle track, brick sidewalk, and plantings in the median could look like once the project is completed. Where there is sufficient space, street trees will be planted within the sidewalk area to provide shade and additional aesthetics. City details depicting key elements and recommended materials are included in Appendix A.

Demonstrate there was consideration for street tree enhancing technology (i.e. silva cell, structure soils, etc.) and why they may or may not be included in the project

Tree enhancing technology is not included in this project. It is not part of the standard details for City of Richmond or VDOT and therefore would not be able to be part of the project budget. Additionally, maintenance by City crews within the right-of-way would also be costly.

Provide locations for the installation of shade trees and tree lawns when space allows

Tree locations are shown on the landscape plans which is the series of sheets numbered 25.

Maintain existing sidewalks/paths along sections of Venable and 18th Streets that are segmented by the new roundabouts to allow for enhanced permeability until future development takes place or until the land becomes privatized

Based on recent feedback from City planners, we plan to maintain the segment of sidewalk between Venable Street and 18th Street to the north. That will maintain a direct connection through the 0.38 Acre area of land to the east of the roundabout until that parcel is developed or

repurposed. See Appendix A for the location of this sidewalk depicted on the graphic showing the residual land.

Provide study on the purpose and design of the residual land created by the roundabouts

The land use adjacent to the roundabouts, especially the main roundabout at Oliver Hill Way and Venable Street, is still being reviewed by City Engineering and Planning staff. The determination of the land use will be made by the City. A graphic depicting the areas of residual land created by the project is included in Appendix A, but this does not depict future land use.