

**From:** [Max Hepp-Buchanan](#)  
**To:** [Eastman, Jeff R. - PDR](#); [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Bike Walk RVA comments on 17th St Farmers Market  
**Date:** Monday, February 01, 2016 12:45:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [Farmers Market Bike Walk RVA.pptx](#)  
[image001.png](#)

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Good afternoon, Jeff and Kathleen (and happy last day, Jeff!) –

Bike Walk RVA (a program of Sports Backers) would like to submit comments to the Urban Design Committee on the proposed 17<sup>th</sup> Street Farmers Market Design up for consideration this week. Our comments have to do primarily with connectivity to and through the market for people who walk and bike.

It is our understanding that the City of Richmond is proposing to use 17<sup>th</sup> St as a connector from the Virginia Capital Trail to the market and Main Street Station. The current proposal is to direct cyclists east from the Capital Trail on 17<sup>th</sup> and through the market to Franklin Street. At that point, they would turn left (north) and go under the train shed to continue on their way to the Capitol Building. I have emphasized that connection on the first slide of the attached PowerPoint file using drawn in green arrows.

If that is the case, it is important for people on bikes to have a dedicated path through the market (from Main St to Franklin St) on the south side of the market. It will not be safe for the entire market to serve as a general “mixing area” of cyclists and pedestrians. While people on bikes should be encouraged/directed to ride slowly and carefully through the market, channeling them through a particular area of the market using bollards, planter boxes, or other physical barrier will help to avoid confusion and potential conflicts. People on foot should be able to cross the bikeway, but there should also be signage warning them that they are stepping into a bikeway and to look both ways. I have emphasized that connection on the second slide of the attachment using green arrows.

Requiring people on bikes to dismount when entering the market is not recommended, as most people on bikes will end up avoiding the market entirely as a result, both as a destination and as a through-way to Main Street Station or the Capitol Building.

Finally, cobblestones are uncomfortable and dangerous for most people to ride on, and are particularly difficult for children to handle. Any bike route to or through the market should not be surfaced with cobbles. We realize there is a historical context to consider, but we recommend surfacing the bike routes through the market and along Franklin Street with bricks instead of cobbles. Even embedding a five-foot wide brick path into the cobbled streets in each direction for cyclists to use would be greatly preferred.

Thank you for passing this on to the members of the UDC.

Sincerely,

**Max Hepp-Buchanan**

Director of Bike Walk RVA | [Sports Backers](#)

100 Avenue of Champions, Suite 300

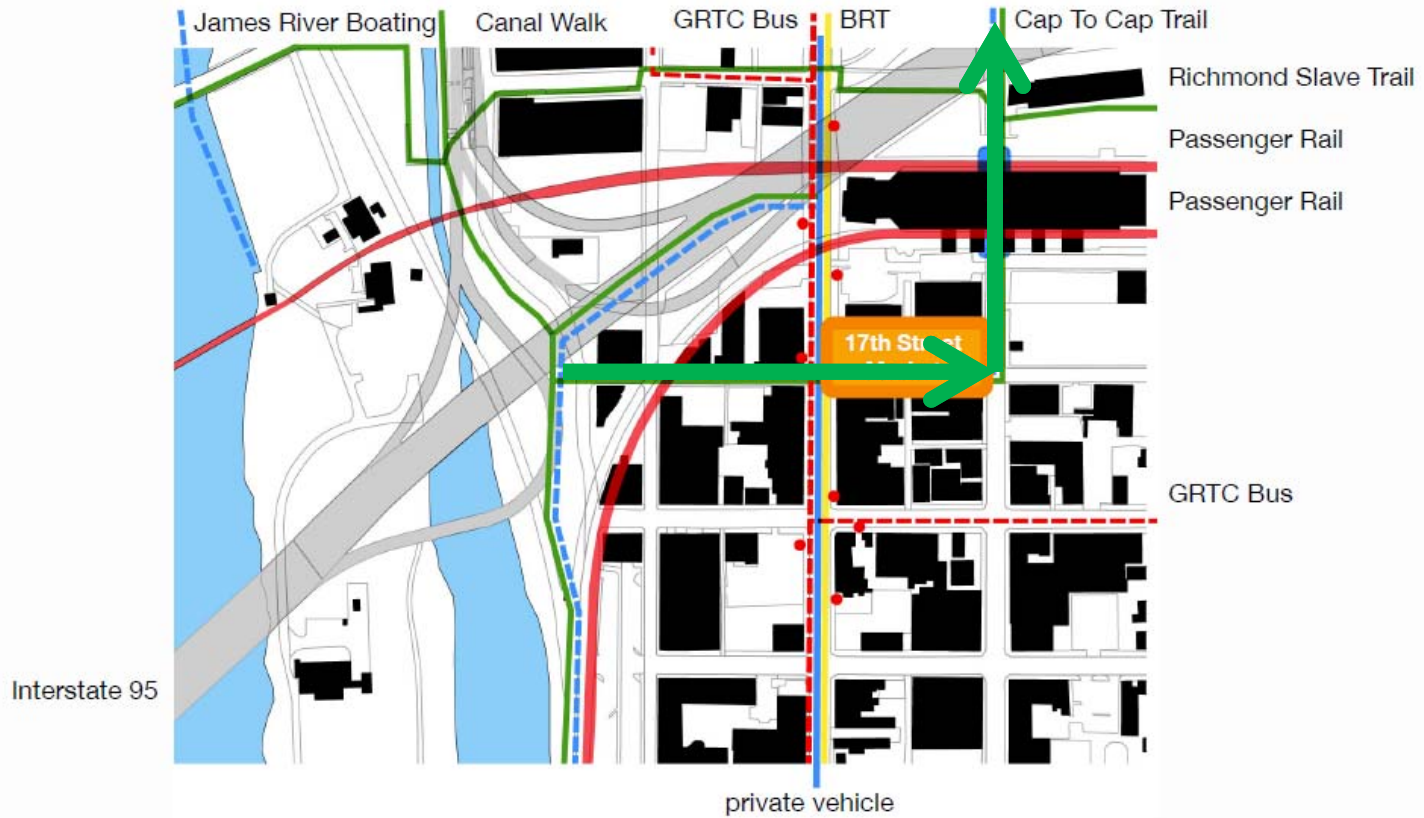
Richmond, VA 23230

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# 17TH STREET MARKET

## SITE CONNECTIONS



Baskervill

17TH STREET MARKET

PLAN

PUBLIC ART

LEGACY VENDORS

FOUNTAIN JET LIGHTING

PEDESTRIAN LIGHTING

TREE UPLIGHTING

POLE & CABLE LIGHTING SYSTEM  
W/ EXTERIOR GRADE SPEAKERS

MAIN STREET

FRANKLIN STREET

BOLLARDS

BIKE RACKS

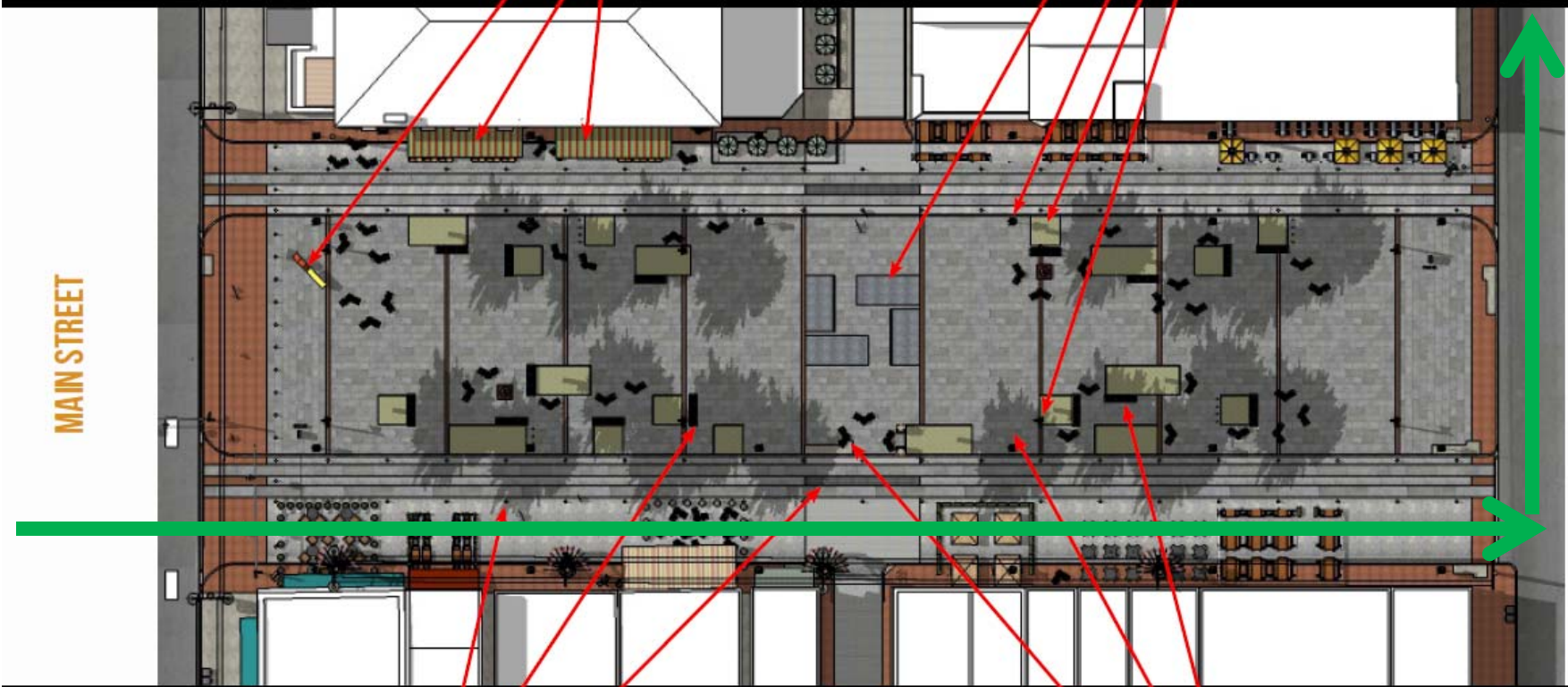
STORM DRAIN

Baskerville

FIXED BENCHES

TRASH/RECYCLING

MOVEABLE CHAIRS & TABLES



**From:** [Beth Weisbrod](#)  
**To:** [Eastman, Jeff R. - PDR](#); [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)  
**Cc:** [Charles Donato](#)  
**Subject:** Virginia Capital Trail connectors to Farmers Market and beyond  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 03, 2016 7:45:37 PM

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Hi Jeff and Kathleen,

I wanted to add my comments to Max Hepp-Buchanan's regarding the 17th St. Farmers Market design that is going before the UDC committee tomorrow. I echo his points emphasizing taking extra care on those connectors from the Virginia Capital Trail through the Farmers Market and ultimately, the State Capitol. Other cities have discovered a much larger return on their investments into multi-use trails if connectors beckon riders of all ages and abilities through safe and convenient infrastructure. This would include families with children and those cyclists who are averse to using bike lanes with no separation from cars. We expect over a million users of the Virginia Capital Trail each year. The VCTF supports those routes and infrastructure that would encourage them all to visit these beautiful new destinations in downtown RVA.

Thank you for passing this onto the entire Urban Design Committee.

Beth Weisbrod  
Executive Director,  
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804-788-6455

**From:** [John Bolecek](#)  
**To:** [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** 17th st UDC comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 03, 2016 6:44:09 PM

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Dear UDC,

Please consider the following which all tie in directly to efforts surrounding and directly connected to this project:

1. Recognize Bank st / Franklin st will be an important east / west bike corridor because cyclists will avoid broad st and main st if possible, and thus mitigate existing cobbles just installed between 18th and 19th with smooth brick paths.
2. Ensure a cobble free bike route on Franklin st through the rail underpass from 15th st into Church Hill, connecting to the termini of the planned 29th bike boulevard.
3. Ensure a cobble free bike route from the capital trail termini (17th st and dock) to Franklin and 17th.
4. Improve the 21st street crossing of the capital trail across Dock st. For a variety of reasons this will be a busy crossing regardless of any treatments at 17th.

Thank you,

John Bolecek

**From:** [Jason James \(jjames\)](#)  
**To:** [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** 17th Street Market  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 03, 2016 9:53:05 PM

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Dear Kathleen,

I understand that the plans for the 17th Street Market/Plaza will be under discussion by the UDC tomorrow. I have also heard that there are related plans to designate 17th Street as a connector from the Capital Trail to downtown Richmond. I am very happy to hear that the city is working on connecting the Capital Trail to the rest of the city and attending to the issue of bicycle infrastructure in this plan. I think, however, that this connection will only be effective if there is a dedicated bicycle lane/path through the market, and if this surface is not paved with rough cobblestones. Forcing people on bicycles to weave through a pedestrian area or walk through the market would make this connection extremely unappealing and thereby undermine the goal of making that connection. An enormous strength of the Capital Trail is that it appeals to a wide range of riders, and it is important to make connections to the trail as safe and accessible as possible.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Best wishes,  
Jason James



**From:** [Nicholas Smith](#)  
**To:** [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on UDC 2016-04  
**Date:** Thursday, February 04, 2016 1:16:15 AM  
**Attachments:** [ATT14630327.png](#)

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Hello,

I'm writing to comment on the bicycle and pedestrian features of the proposed changes to the 17th Street Marketplace.

Given the Capital Trail starts at 17th and Dock and there are plans for a bike route under the train shed to 17th and Franklin, 17th Street will be a crucial connector to complete a core east-west route through the city. People will need to connect, and if there is not a good plan to do so it will cause lots of intermingling between people who walk and bike, which will lead to frustration.



This is what you should do. The brilliance of this design, in historic downtown Amsterdam, is that small elements in the design naturally encourage proper behaviour. Notice how cyclists and pedestrians are fully separated without people really paying attention. The roadway for bikes, which is red-dyed asphalt (which wears out less quickly than paint, and matches red brick), is just an inch or so vertically grade separated from the pedestrian area. There's also a small border between the two zones. The pedestrian zone is cobblestones, while the bike zone is asphalt, and the difference in grade, colour and material, just ever so slightly, lets people realize who belongs where. There's only a small bit of paint near the intersections, along with just a few legally required signs warning drivers, bikers and pedestrians of the change between fully mixed traffic and the car-free zone. But the design informs the space, effortlessly.





This image shows a car-free street with only cobblestones, except not the terribly bumpy kind found in historic parts of Richmond, but the herringbone kind now preferred in new brick areas. The slight change of colour and the border clearly show who should go where. (Two tourists walking in the background didn't get the hint, but as the bike area is so wide and the number of people so low, it's not a problem.) The brick is smoothed and slightly convex (not sharp), to allow for a more pleasant ride (though asphalt is, as always, preferred).

Sometimes a mixed pedestrian-bike zone is appropriate, like in a recreational area or a pedestrian plaza that would not be used as a through route for bikes, but as this will be used by people who bike for commuting and transportation, channeling people into separate bike and pedestrian parts is crucial. This is not to say we need to separate people with a wall or traffic lights, but there should be some careful thought into how to avoid conflict between users.

I strongly recommend that on top of the cobbles or in place of the cobbles, the city install each way either smooth brick or a layer of (preferably red) asphalt, wide enough for two bicycles to be side by side (either so one can pass another or so people can bike next to each other, which makes biking with your friends so much more pleasant, like it does being side by side walking or driving). This would also create a slight grade separation, which should make the difference in zones even more clear. Eight or so feet wide for a one-way path (12 for a two-way) should make the route wide enough for bikes. This would also mean that if part of the street needs to stay open a few hours a day for deliveries, motorized vehicles will still be on the cobbles, not the asphalt or brick, which will keep their speed to a minimum.

A successful design for all users will make the 17th Street Marketplace and surrounding areas a great place for everyone, and will encourage patronage of the entire area.

Thank you,

Nicholas Smith

**From:** [Emily Thomason](#)  
**To:** [Onufer, Kathleen M. - PDR](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comments: 17th Street Marketplace  
**Date:** Thursday, February 04, 2016 1:26:20 AM

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## **Public Comments on the 17th Street Marketplace:**

The upcoming 17th Street Marketplace development is a chance to open up an underutilized public space and make it a flexible, welcoming gather place (as well as an important connection for biking and walking). Especially in car-centric cities, vehicle-free plazas feel like breaths of fresh air.

However, simply barring vehicles and taking down outdated structures doesn't solve all the problems of making a space work for bikes and pedestrians. The 17th Street site will serve as a small but crucial connection for biking in the area.

Yesterday, I rode on the Capitol Trail for the first time (yes, I'm the last Richmonder with a bike to try it out). And while riding along the trail itself (completely separated from cars) was pleasant and relaxing, getting TO the Capitol Trail was anything but. I can honestly say that I won't be biking to the Capitol Trail again until doing so isn't a harrowing, stressful ride.

While some people are probably happy to drive to the trailhead and others will access it via public transportation, its most logical mode of access (biking) is still prohibitively difficult. However, adding dedicated bike lanes along the soon-to-be-closed streets will provide the beginning of a safe route to the Capitol Trail (as well as a useful connection to other nearby destinations).

Because the streets on the north and south sides of the marketplace will be closed, planters or differentiated pavement (Please, not cobblestones -- they are both painful and dangerous) would be sufficient to set aside space for those cycling through (or cycling to the marketplace and stopping).

Asking cyclists to dismount walk their bikes through this area will either be disregarded (causing potential for confusion and conflict) or result in those on bikes feeling unwelcome. And really, what is needed to make this plaza a success, aside from good design, is for everyone to feel welcome to the space.

So please, make safe, welcoming bikeways on the site that are wide enough for

side-by-side cycling (biking while having a conversation is very difficult when you're forced to ride single-file) and clearly-marked (through a change in surface, a slight change in grade or the presence of planters). Planning for walking and biking will really help make this plaza an attractive, safe, vibrant destination!

-Emily Thomason