

MANCHESTER
ALLIANCE
RVA



The Shockoe Partnership, Inc.
1553 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

July 20, 2022

The Honorable Mark Warner
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

Thank you for your leadership on and interest in addressing transportation issues facing the communities and neighborhoods in Richmond, Virginia. We – Hull Street Action, the Manchester Alliance, and Shockoe Partnership – appreciate your efforts to secure funding for various projects, most particularly the Mayo Bridge which is the oldest highway bridge in Richmond and has significant historic and cultural significance. As the connector for residents and businesses in Shockoe Bottom, Manchester, and along Hull Street, the bridge is a vital artery for the well-being of our neighborhoods.

As representatives of the residents and businesses most impacted by the bridge replacement, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss the opportunities this project will provide as well as some of our concerns regarding the proposal.

We believe that the development and design of the Mayo Bridge replacement should go beyond a utilitarian bridge for cars and be considered as a community connector to enhance walking, biking, and recreational uses that drive community and economic development. It appears, however, from our discussions with city officials and others that the bridge will continue to be a four-lane thoroughfare, lacking in bike lanes, pedestrian passage, green space or any significant connection to the James River. If that is the case, we believe that this will be a missed opportunity to comprehensively and smartly connect these historic neighborhoods.

We are also deeply concerned that there will be no cross-river transit at this location during the two-year construction process. Closing the bridge for two years will significantly impact and potentially harm the businesses and residents on both sides of the river. We would like to see the bridge remain open, if at all feasible, and, if not, we would then urge the inclusion of mitigation measures, including development of an economic impact fund.

The last time this bridge repair and replacement was discussed with the public was in 2011 and there was significant community involvement at that time. However, since that time there have been significant changes in the city of Richmond and in our neighborhoods with new

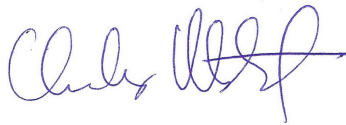
businesses, new residential development, and new priorities. As a result, we are concerned that the public input from more than a decade ago may be stale.

We understand that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will oversee this project and the use of the federal funds that you have helped procure for it, but the role of other stakeholders including the city of Richmond seems unclear. We would expect an opportunity to engage in the planning process again based on today's needs and circumstances.

We would very much like to meet with you or your staff to discuss the future of the Mayo Bridge and the proposed replacement. We are also reaching out to VDOT and other state officials to discuss these opportunities and concerns. But since this infrastructure project will benefit from the federal infrastructure bill, we thought it would be appropriate to discuss our views with you as well. This bridge could be a shining example of how to better connect neighborhoods, uniting them in their economic goals while also creating a vibrant outdoor asset that enhances a relationship with our wonderful James River.

Please contact Janet Woodka, Vice-President of the Manchester Alliance at jlwoodka@mac.com or 571-451-6874 if we can provide any additional information and to schedule a meeting during one of your upcoming trips to Richmond.

Sincerely,



Charlie Westbrook
President, Hull Street Action



Maria Beall
President, Manchester Alliance



Brian White
President, The Shockoe Partnership

CC: Mayor Levar Stoney
Council Vice Chair Ellen Robertson
Council Member Andreas Addison, Chair, Land Use, Housing & Transportation Committee

For the bridge project team

Copy of the current plans that VDOT and the City are already working from	This way the community can be better informed
Immediate public involvement in the process, not after the design phase	Public input from 10 years ago is stale and the area has changed. Delaying input will only result in more delays
Add dedicated bike lanes to the bridge	Was proposed in earlier designs. Also is in keeping directives from the city of Richmond that bike lanes should be included in all new projects and is part of its “transit equity” goal. It is also in keeping with the goals of the ConnectRVA 2045 which is being conducted now and BikePedRVA 2045 which is an update to the 2004 Richmond Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
Expand and widen sidewalks	Pedestrian safety on this bridge is critically important. Is also consistent with the Street Safe focus adopted by PlanRVA and consistent with Richmond 300 plan and RVA connects goals
Ensure that the abutments for fishing and river access are included in the design	Is part of the process in Richmond Connects and the goals of greater and more equitable access to the river
Allow left turns on Cowardin and Commerce – to allow traffic to go over Lee and Manchester Bridges – this should happen now	Easing traffic that currently goes over the Mayo bridge and that will not be allowed during construction of the new bridge is just something that makes sense.
Explanation as to why the bridge must close	
Updated/current timeline for design and construction phases	

For other parties - city council members, mayor's office, planning, and venture richmond

Create a pedestrian walking zone on Hull while the bridge is closed	
Have the city or state pay the Manchester and Shockoe portion of the Venture Richmond fee until completion of the project	
Establish a fund to provide for mitigation funds for businesses impacted by the closure of the bridge	
Increase programming and events in Manchester – sponsored by the city of Venture Richmond	
Create parking to allow for more visitors	
Establish shuttle buses or other transport	
Create a temporary police station in Manchester	

THE SHOCKOE PARTNERSHIP

Mission:

To promote, preserve and enhance the Shockoe neighborhood ensuring its continued growth as a vibrant and welcoming neighborhood that is a valuable cultural and economic asset for its stakeholders and the Region at large.

- The Board shall take an active role in supporting economic development in Shockoe which activities shall include:
 - Encouraging and supporting thoughtful development and public initiatives that will expand the tax base, generate employment, and improve the quality of life for the Shockoe neighborhood
 - Supporting existing and new businesses by advocating on their behalf
 - Working with City Administration to effectively communicate needs and coordinate efforts for accomplishing the strategic goals of the Partnership and the long-term goals of the City's Downtown Master Plan, the Shockoe Small Area Plan and the memorialization of the Heritage Sites.
 - Assist City's DED, VEDP, and GRP with business recruitment to Shockoe
- Encourage policies and funding that will provide a safe, clean and beautiful Shockoe
- Encourage policies that promote tourism and market the neighborhood to visitors

Priorities:

Public Safety

- Shockoe must have City policing policies and enforcement directed to mitigate the potential harm and property damage caused by nightlife related activities and violence (commonly perpetuated by inebriated visitors doing inappropriate things).
- Shockoe needs well-maintained functioning Street lights throughout the neighborhood
- Large public and private surface parking lots should meet all parking related ordinances including appropriate lighting, landscaping, traffic circulation, public safety and maintenance requirements.

• Beautification

- Code enforcement
- Graffiti removal and mitigation
- Trash cans, trash removal program and street cleaning
- Plant proper size and species of trees in tree wells and perform proper maintenance in a timely manner
- Signage (wayfinding)
- Sidewalk, crosswalk, and street repairs

• Parking

- Shockoe must have a comprehensive and coordinated parking program that addresses the parking crisis identified in the City's Desmond Parking Study and maximizes this valuable neighborhood resource in a fair and equitable manner
- The program should include:
 - Plans for public parking (on-street and off-street) that properly balance the needs of the various neighborhood stakeholders
 - Reasonable time limits and restrictions that effectively allocate the public neighborhood parking for business, visitor, and tenant use
 - Appropriate monitoring and updating that responds to neighborhood business and tenant needs and the anticipated continued growth of the neighborhood

• Zoning

- TSP supports the timely implementation of zoning changes consistent with the land-use recommendations in the Richmond 300 Master Plan and the recommendations of the Pulse Corridor Plan as anticipated in the Shockoe Small Area Plan.

• Slave Burial Grounds, Slave Museum and Historic Heritage Sites

- TSP supports the restoration, thoughtful memorialization and proper development of the Slave Burial Grounds, Slave Museum and Historic Heritage Sites

• Business Taxes (BPOL)

- TSP supports a Shockoe Enterprise Zone that would provide a test environment for reducing the business license tax on gross revenue to a rate that is competitive with the surrounding counties

• Workforce Housing Incentives

- TSP supports City, State and Federal programs that incentivize the development of mixed income housing in the Shockoe Community

Amy Chapman	Capital One
Anne Paul	The James Center
Brian Chandler	Commonwealth Public Relations
Brian Jackson	Hirschler Fleischer
Brian White	Main St. Realty, Inc.
Burt Pinnock	Baskervill
Charles Macfarlane	Macfarlane Partners, LLC
Chris Hull	Helium Studio
Chris Johnson	The Monument Companies
Chris Tsui	EAT Restaurant Partners
David White	SWA Construction
Eliza Heyward	Arts & Letters Creative Co.
Jeremy Connell	Pareto, LLC
Kathy Graziano	Roth Jackson
Ken Wall	Sam Miller's
Lucy Meade	Venture Richmond
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Richard Stutts	
Richard Wintsch	Startup Virginia
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