



ASHLAND TO PETERSBURG TRAIL STUDY

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ACRONYMS

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials
ACS	American Community Survey
ATP	Ashland to Petersburg
BPSP	Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Program
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DRPT	Department of Rail and Public Transportation
EAWG	Environmental Agency Working Group
ECG	East Coast Greenway
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FOLAR	Friends of the Lower Appomattox River
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program
LEDPA	Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative
LTS	Level of Traffic Stress
NACTO	National Association of City Transportation Officials
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
PlanRVA	Richmond Regional Planning District Commission
PSAP	Pedestrian Safety Action Plan
RDM	Road Design Manual
RSTP	Regional Surface Transportation Program
STAG	Stakeholder Technical Advisory Group
STP	Surface Transportation Program
TAP	Transportation Alternatives Program
TED	Traffic Engineering Division
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VCTF	Virginia Capital Trail Foundation
VCU	Virginia Commonwealth University
VDEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
VDOT	Virginia Department of Transportation
VSU	Virginia State University
VUU	Virginia Union University

Section 1: INTRODUCTION

The Ashland to Petersburg (ATP) Trail Study was a collaborative effort on behalf of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), a Stakeholder Technical Advisory Group (STAG) - government agencies and special interest groups that have an interest in the development of the study (localities, metropolitan planning organizations, planning district commissions, and stakeholders), and an Environmental Agency Working Group (EAWG) - government agencies with jurisdiction or oversight as well as those that have regulatory responsibilities for future project implementation (federal and state agencies, including the Federal Highway Administration [FHWA], the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE], and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality [VDEQ]) with input from the general public. VDOT initiated the ATP Trail Study to identify a preferred corridor for a multi-use trail that would extend between the Town of Ashland and the City of Petersburg, a distance of approximately 40 miles. The preferred corridor for a multi-use trail would be located within the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico, cities of Colonial Heights, Petersburg and Richmond, and the Town of Ashland. The ATP Trail Study evaluated existing conditions and identified a corridor least impactful to environmental resources with feedback from state and federal agencies, affected localities, special interest groups, and the general public. However, the preferred trail alignment is a conceptual alignment and meant to represent a starting point for further investigation at the local level. Factors such as right of way acquisition, topography, environmental impacts, and budget all influence the final location of the trail. Further detailed study will need to be undertaken before a final alignment is identified. **Figure 1-1** provides an overview of the study area location termini and the localities in which the multi-use trail would be located.

The ATP Trail Study adhered to the following process: identification of a study purpose and associated needs (**Section 2**), development of preliminary corridor options (**Section 4**), evaluation and resulting refinement of the preliminary corridor options (**Section 6**), evaluation of the retained corridor options for detailed evaluation (**Section 7**), and identification of a preferred corridor for a multi-use trail that would connect people and places across the Richmond region (**Section 8**). Following the development of the study purpose and need, the ATP Trail Study evaluated prior active transportation planning studies in the region, consulted with the STAG, and reviewed public comments on the identification of opportunities and constraints to develop corridor options. After the development of the corridor options, a two-tiered evaluation was performed to identify a preferred corridor. During the preliminary evaluation, the corridor options were examined based on their ability to meet the study purpose and needs and their potential for impacts to wetlands and streams. The detailed evaluation refined the corridor options by examining which represented the least potential environmentally impactful option, while also considering cost and feasibility of implementation, in order to recommend a preferred corridor. The ATP Trail Study aimed to identify a preferred corridor that meets the study purpose, is supported by regional and local entities and the public, is agreed upon by environmental agencies as the preliminary least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, and is consistent with federal and state guidance.



The ATP Trail Study recommends a preferred corridor to inform development of future active transportation projects in the Richmond region. Prior to final design, the preferred corridor and associated segments would be subject to additional analyses as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related environmental statutes and regulations. While there is no dedicated funding source for design and construction, this study serves as a resource for localities as they pursue state, federal, and non-traditional funding sources for individual trail segments. The associated localities are encouraged to use portions of this study in their own planning efforts, whether in comprehensive plan updates, amendments, or in future funding applications. The results of the study are intended to help establish trail priorities and minimize unforeseen constraints as projects proceed to implementation. Implementation of individual project segments along the preferred corridor could occur after the allocation of appropriate potential future project application and funding and following the completion of separate environmental reviews and development of detailed design, as necessary.



Appomattox River Trail System (Colonial Heights)

Figure 1-1: Study Area

