Meeting #2 Minutes

Route 631 Corridor Study – Phase 1

July 31, 2019

Albemarle County Offices

In attendance:

Dan Butch, Albemarle County	Rex Linville, 5th & Avon CAC
Amanda Poncy, City of Charlottesville	Phillip Haas, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Troy Austin, VDOT	Patty Hurd, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Adam Moore, VDOT	Meredyth Sanders, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Charles Proctor, VDOT	Chris Tiesler, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

Welcome and Introductions

Chris Tiesler (Kittelson) welcomed the Route 631 Stakeholder Group and thanked them for attending the concluding meeting for Phase 1 of the Route 631 Corridor Study. He welcomed Patty Hurd, who introduced herself as the project manager for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Route 631 Corridor Study. The stakeholders and remaining study team members introduced themselves.

Following the introductions, the study team provided the Stakeholder Group with a summary of findings from Phase 1, led a field review of key points along the corridor, and revisited the vision, goals, objectives, and scope for Phase 2 of the Corridor Study.

Background and Scope of Phase 1

Chris reminded the Stakeholder Group that VDOT identified the Route 631 corridor for further study through its Strategically Targeted and Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) process. VDOT set up the study to include two phases. Chris explained that the first phase focused 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.

Schedule, Milestones, and Assumptions

Chris Tiesler provided a recap of the two-month Phase 1 schedule, which will conclude in late July/Early August. The first two tasks for Phase 1 involved data gathering, identifying issues and opportunities, and conducting an existing conditions assessment for the corridor. The first task of Phase 1 was completed at the end of June 2019. The third task is near completion, and has involved identifying and refining draft goals, objectives, and a scope for Phase 2. The second and final stakeholder meeting marks the conclusion of Phase 1.

Phase 2 of the Route 631 study is scheduled to start in September 2019 and is expected to conclude within thirteen (13) months.

Corridor Overview

The study team provided a map of the Route 631 corridor and shared the following insights concerning corridor land use, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, transit accommodations, safety, intersection operations, and travel speeds, time, and reliability:

Land Use

- Existing land uses adjoining the northern half of the corridor (north of I-64) generally include a mix of medium-density residential, planned unit development, highway corridor mixed-use, and commercial/office uses.
- Existing land uses adjoining the southern half of the corridor (south of I-64) primarily consist of medium-density residential uses, with some commercial/office and low-density residential uses.
- Generators along the corridor include schools (The Covenant School, Jackson Via Elementary School), shopping destinations (Willoughby Shopping Center, 5th Street Station Shopping Center), places of worship (Calvary Chapel Charlottesville, Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses), and government institutions (Albemarle County 5th Street Office Building).
    - The Stakeholders recommended adding the future connection to Biscuit Run Park and Azalea Park as generators
- In-process developments along the corridor include:
    - Southwood
        - Phase 1: 225 apartments/townhomes, 25 single family units, 37,250 SF of office space, and 37,250 SF of retail space
        - Phase 2: 143 apartments/town homes, and 16 single family units
    - Royal Fern
        - 150 mixed apartments, 50 town homes, and 2 acres of commercial space
    - Brookdale
        - 96 multi-family dwelling
    - Timberland Park

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations

- Existing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations
    - Pedestrian facilities along the corridor include standard sidewalk and substandard paved paths (< 4' wide). Pedestrian facilities are primarily located on the north side of Route 631, with a small stretch of sidewalk located on the south side of Route 631 between Harris Road and the Charlottesville/Albemarle County border. Stakeholders noted the lack of continuity in pedestrian facilities along the corridor.
    - There are four signalized crossings on the corridor at Harris Road, 5th Street Station Parkway, I-64 WB ramps, and I-64 EB ramps.
    - The longest length of the corridor without a marked, signalized crossing is 1.22 miles
    - Two of the four signalized crossings (I-64 WB ramps and I-64 EB ramps) do not have marked crosswalks.
    - Marked bicycle lanes are provided on Route 631 between Harris Street and 5th Street Station Parkway, and on the portion of Bent Creek Road adjoining the 5th Street Station Shopping Center.
    - A shared use path runs along Sunset Avenue extending from Route 631 to Redfields Road.
- Planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities
    - Albemarle County has planned to implement either sidewalks or shared use paths along both sides of Route 631 from Albemarle County limits south of Ambrose Commons Drive. Stakeholders noted that the specifics of the planned pedestrian facility would be determined during later planning and design stages.
    - Albemarle County has planned to implement sidewalks on Old Lynchburg Road and County Green Road north of the study corridor.
    - Albemarle County has planned to implement shared use paths connecting Biscuit Run Park with points west and north, including crossings of Route 631 at Sunset Avenue Extended and north of 5th Street Commercial.
    - Albemarle County does not plan to implement bicycle lanes on Route 631 within the extents of the study corridor.

Transit Accommodations

- Three Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) Routes serve the study corridor:
    - Route 3: Southwood and Belmont
        - Runs from the City of Charlottesville into Albemarle County along the full length of the study corridor, with a turn-around at Hickory Street and the Southwood Mobile Home Park.
        - Thirty (30) minute headways during weekday peak hours, and one-hour headways during all other weekday service hours
        - Makes up 5.04% of annual ridership for all routes in the CAT system (December 2017 – December 2018)

        - Makes up 19.88% of Albemarle Funded Routes (excluding University rides) (Monthly ridership, December 2018)
    - Route 4: Cherry Avenue and Harris Road
        - Runs from the City of Charlottesville to 5th Street Station Parkway (along Route 631), with a turn-around at Willoughby Shopping Center.
        - pways during weekday peak hours, and one hour and ten minutes (70) headways during all other weekday service hours
        - Makes up 5.25% of annual ridership for all routes in the CAT system (December 2017 – December 2018)
    - Route 6: Ridge Street and Prospect Avenue
        - Runs from the City of Charlottesville to 5th Street Station Parkway (Turns onto Route 631 from Harris Road), with a turn-around at Willoughby Shopping Center.
        - One-hour headways during all service hours
        - Makes up 3.74% of annual ridership for all routes in the CAT system (December 2017 – December 2018)
- The study team did not gather stop-level ridership data during Phase 1 of the corridor study.
    - The study team will work with Albemarle County (Dan Butch) and CAT staff to obtain stop-level ridership during Phase 2 of the study
    - The Stakeholders anecdotally shared that high-ridership CAT stations along the Study corridor include Hickory Street and Old Lynchburg Road

Safety

- The study team conducted a high-level scan of five years of crash data along the study corridor (2014-2018).
- The top three crash types that occurred along the corridor between 2014 and 2018 included angle (41%), rear end (32%), and sideswipe, same direction (8%).
    - Other crash types observed along the corridor include fixed object – off road (7%), head on (6%), pedestrian (<1%), and bicycle (<1%).
        - The Stakeholders noted that some of the head-on crashes may be incorrectly coded angle crashes. The study team agreed, and explained that they would take a detailed look at crash reports for the study corridor as part of Phase 2.
- Most of the study corridor crashes were located within in the influence area of intersections (182 total - 93%) as opposed to along segments (13 total – 7%).
    - The study team shared a map showing crash totals by intersection. Route 631 intersections with higher numbers of crashes included Harris Road, 5th Street Station Parkway, Old Lynchburg Road, and the EB and WB I-64 ramps.
    - The study team shared a map showing the specific location of segment crashes along the corridor. Many of the segment crashes were located in close proximity to the influence area of intersections and could be related to intersections.
- The study corridor has experienced a general increasing trend in the number of crashes per year, which aligns with a general increasing trend in annual average daily traffic (AADT).

  - The study team explained that VDOT uses a model to estimate AADT for roads statewide, and that the comparison of AADT and annual crash data should be used to gather insights about general trends.
- One fatal crash occurred on the study corridor in 2016.
  - This crash involved a drunk driver.
- VDOT conducted a statewide safety needs assessment as part of the VTrans2040 Vision Plans and Needs Assessment. The safety needs assessment consisted of identifying the top intersections and segments each VDOT District based on Potential for Safety Improvements (PSI). A PSI score is the number of crashes minus the predicted for that type of intersection or roadway and the traffic volumes. The study team checked the intersections and segments identified for VDOT Culpeper District through the VTrans2040 safety needs assessment, and identified three locations along the Route 631 corridor:
  - Route 631/Old Lynchburg Road – District Rank 43
  - Route 631 from Moore's Creek to I-64 – District Rank 251
  - Route 631 from Harris Road to South of 5th Street Station Parkway – District Rank 122

  VDOT staff noted that more recent PSI scores may be available for the Fredericksburg District, which they can share in support of Phase 2 of the study.
- The study team took a closer look at intersection safety on the study corridor by calculating an equivalent property damage only (EPDO) score for all intersections on the study corridor. EPDO scores consider the quantity and severity of crashes occurring within an intersection's influence area. After calculating EPDO scores for the study intersections, the study team highlighted the five highest-scoring intersections:
  - 5th Street Station Parkway – 49 crashes
  - Harris Street – 22 crashes
  - I-64 EB Ramps – 38 crashes
  - Old Lynchburg Road – 16 crashes
  - I-64 WB Ramps – 21 crashes

  Each of the five intersections were characterized by higher numbers of injury and severe injury crashes, and a high number of angle and rear end crashes.
- Three bicycle and pedestrian crashes have occurred along the study corridor over the past five (5) years of available data:
  - Bicycle PDO crash at Old Lynchburg Road
  - Pedestrian minor injury crash at I-64 EB ramps
  - Pedestrian severe injury crash at 5th Street Station Parkway

Intersection Operations

- The study team assessed existing intersection operations at signalized and unsignalized intersections located along the study corridor.
- Most intersections in the study area operate at LOS D or better during the AM peak hour
  - Two intersections have movements operating at LOS E: Stagecoach Road and 5th Street Station Parkway
  - Two intersections have movements that are near capacity:

        - Route 631 and WB Ramps: v/c=0.93 (WBR)
        - 5th Street Station Parkway: v/c=0.92 (WBR)
    - The I-64 EB off-ramp is susceptible to potential queue spillbacks
        - Queue ~ 625 feet
        - Less than 700 feet of deceleration
- Most intersections in the study area operate at LOS D or better during the PM peak hour
    - Three intersections have movements operating at LOS F: I-63 EB ramp, Bent Creek Road, and 5th Street Station Parkway
    - Two intersections have movements that are at or over capacity:
        - I-63 EB off-ramp: v/c=1.00
        - 5th Street Station Parkway
            - v/c=1.12 (WBR)
            - v/c=1.28 (NBR)
    - The I-64 EB off-ramp is still susceptible to potential queue spillbacks
        - Queue ~800 feet
        - Less than 500 feet of deceleration

Corridor Travel Speeds, Travel Times, and Reliability

- The study team used HERE data (January 2018 to June 2018) to understand average midweek PM travel speeds on Route 631 between W Main Street in the City of Charlottesville and I-64 in the study area.
- HERE Data shows average PM peak travel speeds between Harris Road and I-64 ranging between 20-30 mph in the southbound direction and 10-20 mph in the northbound direction (compared to less than 10 mph in both directions between Eliot Avenue and Main Street in the City of Charlottesville).
- The study team was able to use the same HERE data to understand how travel times change along the corridor (between West Main Street and I-64). The study team found that travel times can range between four (4) minutes and twelve (12) minutes, with longer travel times during the AM Peak in the northbound direction (towards the City of Charlottesville) and longer travel times during the PM Peak in the southbound direction (away from the City of Charlottesville). The average travel time for the corridor ranges between four (4) minutes and under nine (9) minutes.
- HERE data also provides insights about level of travel time reliability, a metric from MAP-21/FAST Act. The highest travel time variability on the corridor (between West Main Street and I-64) occurs in the northbound direction during the AM peak period. However, no time-of-day shows 80th percentile travel times above the reliability threshold.

  The study team noted that similar travel speed, travel time, and reliability data could be acquired for the full Route 631 Corridor (Harris Street to Ambrose Commons Drive) as part of Phase 2 of the study.

Field Visit

The study team and stakeholders participated in a corridor field visit that focused on four locations along the study corridor:

1. Route 631 and 5th Street Station Parkway
2. Route 631 and 5th Street Commercial
3. Route 631 and Stagecoach Road
4. Route 631 and Old Lynchburg Road
    a. The study team and stakeholders walked along the north side of Route 631 from Stagecoach Road to Old Lynchburg Road

Before visiting the four corridor locations, the study team and stakeholders drove up and down the full length of the corridor twice.

The following insights were recorded at each field visit location:

Route 631 and 5th Street Station Parkway

- South leg of the intersection showed evidence of a recent crash involving a vehicle turning right onto Route 631
- Stakeholders observed multiple vehicles turning right from 5th Street Station Parkway onto Route 631 – this is likely a heavy movement
- Vehicles traveling at or above the speed limit along Route 631 through the intersection
- Pedestrian signal head missing from SW corner of intersection, despite the presence of a crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection
- Curb ramps need to be updated to comply with ADA standards
- Existing sidewalk on the north side of Route 631 overgrown with grass and other plants
- One pedestrian observed crossing Route 631 from north to south
- Two pedestrians observed walking east on south side of Route 631 to wait for the bus at nearby CAT stop
- Vehicles traveling from 5th Street Station Parkway northbound onto or across Route 631 experience vehicular site distance issues
- No pedestrian crossing on the west leg of the intersection
- Pedestrian call in the southwest corner of the intersection is not at the correct height

Route 631 and 5th Street Commercial

- CAT stop on south side of Route 631 is not ADA-accessible. There is no sidewalk connection or bus pad at this location. There is no marked pedestrian crossing between the I-64 interchange and 5th Street Station Parkway
- Roadway vertical curve and high-speed vehicles contribute to vehicular site distance issues
- Vehicles use the dedicated left-turns at this intersection to make U-turns – one vehicle observed making a U-turn during the field visit

- VDOT investigating opportunities to restrict vehicle access at this intersection. With the new development that is under construction by the Holiday Inn (south side of Route 631), exiting left-turns would be prohibited through the use of signage and guidance with curb alignment (not a median restriction). In the future, if/when the Christian Aid Mission property (north side of Route 631) is redeveloped, the median could be modified to enforce the exiting left-turns restriction.

Route 631 and Stagecoach Road

- The stop bar on the south leg of the intersection could be moved closer to the intersection
- Roadway vertical curve and high-speed vehicles contribute to vehicular site distance issues
- Police Department directs traffic at this intersection during the AM peak to facilitate access to the Covenant School (located south of Route 631)
- The recent addition of the Afton Pond Court access on the north side of Route 631 has contributed to demand, delay, and queues at this intersection
- One pedestrian observed walking eastbound on the north side of Route 631

Pedestrian facility between Stagecoach Road and Old Lynchburg Road

- The substandard pedestrian facility is overgrown with vegetation in places, changes paving materials, has uneven surfaces, and is too narrow to meet VDOT standards.

Route 631 and Old Lynchburg Road

- Curb ramps need to be updated to comply with ADA standards
- Stakeholders observed multiple vehicles making two-stage left-turns from the north leg of Old Lynchburg Road onto Route 631 – this is likely a heavy movement
- One bicyclist observed turning right onto Route 631 from the north leg of Old Lynchburg Road
- Bus stop is not ADA compliant.
- There is no marked pedestrian crossing across Route 631 at this location. The next marked pedestrian crossing of Route 631 is at 5th Street Station Parkway.

Goals and Objectives

The stakeholders and study team returned to the Albemarle County offices to review the revised vision, goals, and objectives for Phase 2 of the Route 631 corridor study. The study team revised the goals and objectives based on stakeholder feedback from the first stakeholder meeting. The goals and objectives were also revised to be measurable and allow for robust alternatives analysis during Phase 2 of the project. The study team reminded the stakeholders that members of the public would have time to review and provide feedback on the goals and objectives during phase 2 of the study.

Vision

Route 631 is a Complete Street that supports development and provides safe and comfortable travel for all uses and users of the roadway.

Stakeholder Feedback:

- Stakeholders generally agreed with vision for the study

Goal: Improve Safety

- Reduce/manage vehicular conflict points
- Manage vehicular travel speeds
- Provide continuous bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Provide protected pedestrian crossing opportunities
- Provide separation between vehicular travel and bicycle/pedestrian travel

Stakeholder Feedback:

- Stakeholders recommended adding an objective to provide continuous, **consistent** bicycle and pedestrian facilities. They recommended adding this objective to so that non-motorized facilities will consistently meet standards and contribute to the overarching corridor character. By setting consistent expectations about planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities, Albemarle County and VDOT can expect consistent, unified private and public investments in corridor facilities.
- Otherwise, stakeholders generally agreed with this goal and its objectives.

Goal: Manage Congestion

- Increase person throughput capacity
- Reduce travel time variability
- Make efficient use of right-of-way for all users/evaluate road diet opportunities

Stakeholder Feedback:

- Stakeholders recommended adding an objective specifically related to intersection delay and travel time through the corridor.
- Stakeholders recommended removing “evaluate road diet opportunities” as an objective.
- Otherwise, stakeholders generally agreed with this goal and its objectives.

Goal: Support Economic Development

- Provide access to jobs for users with a range of abilities
- Provide mode choice in access to employment opportunities
- Beautify the corridor

Stakeholder Feedback:

- Stakeholders generally agreed with this goal and its objectives.

Goal: Environmental Sustainability and Community Health

- Provide bicycle facilities that connect to existing and future trails
- Provide ADA accessible transit stops
- Prioritize multimodal investments to and near mixed and low-income housing developments

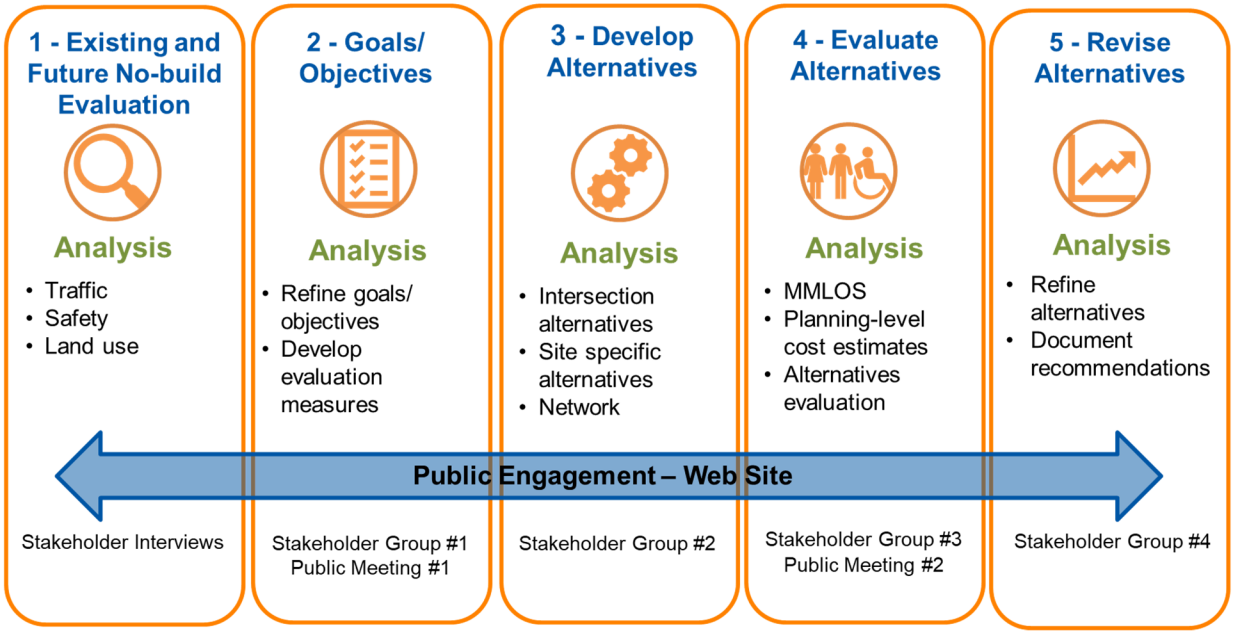
Stakeholder Feedback:

- Stakeholders recommended changing the second objective to provide ADA access corridor-wide, not just at transit stops.
- Stakeholders recommended adding an objective related to carbon emissions. The study team explained that an objective related to carbon emissions would be difficult to directly measure as part of a planning study.
- Otherwise, stakeholders generally agreed with this goal and its objectives.

Phase 2 Scope

Patty Hurd (Kittelson) provided the stakeholders with a high-level outline of the proposed scope for phase 2 of the Route 631 corridor study.

Phase 2 Scope Outline



- Traffic Analysis
  - Future No-Build Projections (Design year – 2040)
  - Operational Analysis

        - No-build and alternatives
- Safety Analysis
    - Evaluate existing crash patterns/ future multimodal travel patterns
    - Evaluate intervention measures
- Recommendations
    - Segment and intersection configurations
    - Identify near- and long-term improvements
    - For intersections improvements – evaluate cost/benefit

Stakeholder Feedback

The stakeholders provided the following feedback on the Phase 2 scope outline:

- Incorporate online engagement into the public outreach process
- Include the following local groups in the phase 2 stakeholder group:
    - Habitat for Humanity representative for the Southwood development
    - Albemarle County Emergency Services (Police) representative
    - Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) representative
- Conduct a mid-year analysis (2030) to understand how in-process development may affect traffic operations at corridor intersections

Next Steps

Patty Hurd thanked everyone for attending and reminded them that Phase 1 of the Route 631 corridor study was near its conclusion. She noted that the study team would present a scope for Phase 2 of the corridor study to VDOT, and that Phase 2 would likely kick off in mid- to late-September 2019.

Attachments: Meeting presentation

Cc: Stakeholders, Meeting Attendees