

Floyd Avenue Fact Sheet

Incorporating comments

A survey was distributed during the last meeting. How did people respond to the 6 questions? (Percentages rounded to nearest whole number.)

1. Traffic circles. 82% support the use of traffic circles (or mini-roundabouts).
2. Bump-outs. 74% support; but many expressed caveat that parking should not be eliminated by bump-outs.
3. Bike parking. 60% support the concept of converting some vehicle parking to bike parking.
4. Diverters. 62% support as a way to preserve low vehicle traffic volumes.
5. Replacing signals. 80% support removing unwarranted signals if there's a better alternative.

There was a lot of discussion at the last meeting about possible intersection treatments. What trends did the comments reveal?

Comments were generally very similar to the written survey responses. Other questions and concerns are answered in more detail below.

I heard this project was a done deal. When did you start developing design concepts for Floyd Avenue?

Specific intersection design concepts began after the May 28 public meeting. City staff and the consultant team first reviewed the surveys and written comments to determine any clear trends (e.g. do you support traffic circles?).

Mode priority

The term “bike boulevard” seems to imply vehicle restrictions. Can we call it something else?

“RVA Bike-Walk Street” is the term being used by the City and the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission. The intent and nature of the project does not change with the name. We heard from the community that “bike boulevard” seemed to send a confusing message to people. “RVA Bike-Walk Street” is also the term used in the context of the City’s ongoing bicycle master plan.

Is there too much car traffic to create a bike-friendly street?

Short answer: no.

Floyd Avenue has about 1,000 per day. (That’s total vehicles in both directions during a 24-hour period.)

Will cars (or any motor vehicle) be banned on Floyd Avenue?

No. The design would give people more choice about transportation modes, not less. Each of the proposed intersection treatments has been designed to accommodate city fire trucks, city buses, and large trucks that may occasionally need to drive along Floyd Avenue.

Why not stripe bike lanes on Floyd Avenue?

Bike lanes are typically installed on busier streets with a mix of land uses. Residential streets can be designed to accommodate both motorized and non-motorized traffic safely in the street. Additionally, striped bike lanes would require either removing parking on at least one side of the street, or widening the road. Both of these options were counter to the community vision of Floyd Avenue.

Is there enough street width to create a buffered bicycle lane (between parked cars and the curb)?

The total width of Floyd Avenue could be repurposed to create a buffered bicycle lane. However, it would have a similar impact on parking as striped bike lanes. Buffered lanes are about 8 feet wide and carry 2-way bike traffic. They are buffered (or protected) from vehicle traffic by about 2-3 feet of space (e.g. paint, bollards, curbs, etc.).

Buffered bike lanes have been tremendously successful around the country on busy, mixed use streets. They are not generally considered necessary for residential streets.

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Construction

The corridor is about 2 miles long. How many intersections are you recommending be altered?

Floyd Avenue has 27 intersections between Thompson Street and Laurel Street. 10 are controlled by traffic signals; 7 are controlled by all-way stop signs. The proposed design recommends modifying a total of 14 intersections.

If the entire design concept was built, how long would construction take?

It is expected that construction could begin early in 2015 and be completed by the end of summer 2015.

If the design concept was built, would Floyd Avenue be repaved?

Floyd Avenue is scheduled to be repaved between Boulevard and Thompson Street in November 2014. Repaving is not a direct outcome of this project, simply because of the funding sources. City paving/repaving projects are programmed separately.

Parking

Does the proposed design eliminate any parking spaces on Floyd Avenue? If so, where?

The proposed design includes physical features (bump-outs) that would remove illegal parking.

Auburn Avenue: **4** bump-outs on Floyd Avenue; **2** bump-outs on Auburn Avenue; all within 20 feet of the crosswalks.

Belmont Avenue: **2** bump-outs on Belmont Avenue; none on Floyd Avenue; both within 20 feet of crosswalks.

Harrison Street: **2** bump-outs on Floyd Avenue; both within 20 feet of crosswalk.

Linden Street: equivalent of **3** bump-outs on Floyd Avenue within 20 feet of crosswalks.

Cherry Street: 4 bump-outs on Floyd Avenue; 2 are in no-parking areas; **2** are within 20 feet of crosswalks.

The 15 bump-outs (bolded above) would remove 15 illegal parking spaces.

Of those 15 spaces, 4 are on Floyd Avenue outside of VCU's campus.

Does the proposed design add any parking spaces on Floyd Avenue? If so, where?

As suggested at the previous public meeting, city staff is reviewing the corridor to assess the possibility of removing parking restrictions to provide more on-street parking. This effort is currently underway and includes side streets and loading zones for delivery trucks that may be relocated to Main Street or eliminated altogether.

There is alley parking available behind my home. Can that offset any loss of street parking?

Short answer: probably.

This is a hard question to quantify since field observations can't determine if vehicles belong to homeowners. On a June weeknight between 5:15 pm and 6:00 pm, about half of the alley parking spaces were available.

Is there a connection between parking and traffic safety at intersections?

Yes, parking at (or in) an intersection as a direct impact on safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. A driver's eyes are typically 3 ½ feet above the ground – the height of a child. When an intersection is partially blocked by vehicles, drivers on side streets (without the right-of-way) have no choice but to creep into the intersection to see around parked cars. This can lead to dangerous angle crashes.

Does illegal parking impede the flow of emergency vehicles?

Yes. The more obstacles blocking an intersection, the longer it takes for emergency vehicles to pass through. Emergency vehicles also have larger turning radii, which is partly why city ordinances around the country often prohibit parking within 20 or 30 feet of an intersection. Fire hydrants are also often located near intersection corners.

Is the City recommending conversion of any parallel parking to angle parking?

Not on Floyd Avenue. However, the proposed design at the Morris Street intersection shows how some parallel parking could be converted to angle parking on the south side of the intersection. Back-in angle parking has been increasing across the country, including Washington, DC, Delaware, Indiana, Texas, Arizona, Utah, Oregon, and Washington. If parallel parking on Morris/Brunswick Streets is converted to back-in angle parking, the total number of spaces would be about the same.

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Sight distance

When driving/bicycling/walking up to an intersection, I often can't see over/around parked cars. Will any of the recommended designs improve line of sight?

Yes. Bump-outs are proposed at Auburn Avenue, Belmont Avenue (side street approaches only), Harrison Street, Linden Street, and Cherry Street. It is important to note that parking cars legally will dramatically improve sight distance (i.e. public safety) at other intersections.

Street lights

Will lighting be improved as part of this project?

From Dept. of Public Utilities: Once the ornamental lighting installations are complete down Mulberry, the lights will be installed along Floyd beginning with the 2600 and 2700 blocks. We believe the current funding (to include the appropriations that were requested in the FY15 CIP budget) will cover the installations along Mulberry, the removal of the existing overhead shoebox lights along Grace and Mulberry, and the installations of lights on the 2600 and 2700 blocks of Floyd. We anticipate needing additional funding in FY16 (beginning July 1, 2015) to continue the installations east along Floyd. We don't expect to start the installation of lights on Floyd until after January 2015.

Maintenance (landscaping, trash, etc.)

Who would be responsible for maintaining traffic circles, bump-outs, or any other landscaping?

The City maintains landscape traffic calming features in its right-of-way. However, neighborhood associations or volunteer groups sometimes volunteer to take care of plantings, mowing, pruning, etc.

I'm concerned about increased trash from a street that promotes more walking and bicycling. Who will clean it up?

Trash collection in the public right-of-way is a responsibility of the City.

Would the City save money by using traffic circles instead of signals?

Yes. Circles do not require electricity, equipment updates and repairs, or structural modifications. The cost to maintain landscaping is substantially less.

I would like to volunteer to help maintain circles and/or bump-outs. How can my neighbors and I take that on?

Residents are welcome to participate in the upkeep and beautification of public landscaping. The initial step is to coordinate with the City through your local civic association.

Would tree roots be protected during construction?

City contractors are required to follow all construction requirements related to protecting natural features (e.g. trees) as well as adjacent private property.

Walkability

Can crosswalks be painted without raising the level of the street (i.e. speed table)?

Yes. The proposed design recommends painting crosswalks at intersections where modifications are proposed. Raised crosswalks are sometimes installed on residential streets to help calm traffic. However, we heard from residents that at-grade (flat) crosswalks are preferred.

If new crosswalks are painted, can parked cars still block the path of people trying to cross the street?

Police can enforce the existing laws prohibiting parking close to intersections. Striped crosswalks will not add any new laws or restrictions. Painted crosswalks do help people understand where crossings are expected and drivers are less likely to park in a location they know is blocking the safe passage of pedestrians.

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Would visible crosswalks on Floyd Avenue improve pedestrian safety?

Visible crosswalks help alert drivers and bicyclists that they are approaching a cross-street and should expect to see people walking. Being alert to the presence of pedestrians keeps vehicles speeds down, which improves pedestrian safety.

Trucks and buses

Does the proposed design accommodate fire trucks? GRTC buses? Moving trucks?

Yes. Each of the proposed intersection treatments has been designed to accommodate larger vehicles.

Fire trucks (labeled as "RVA quint") need to be able to make all turning movements. GRTC's Grove Avenue Route #16 bus travels south on Harrison Street, then left onto Floyd Avenue.

Which type of intersection allows better flow for emergency vehicles – traffic circles or stop signs?

Short answer: traffic circles.

Emergency vehicles are required to obey most traffic laws. They have to stop at red lights and stop signs before crossing an intersection.

When a fire truck loaded with water weigh about 35,000 pounds (10 times the weight of a Toyota Camry). The approach to a stop sign and acceleration after a stop sign is more difficult and time consuming than a traffic circle.

Speed cushions/humps

Would speed cushions (raised surfaces) slow vehicle traffic?

Yes. Speed cushions (humps, lumps, tables, etc.) do slow down traffic. However, they are not part of the recommended design.

Does the City recommend speed cushions (raised surfaces) on Richmond streets?

Generally, no. Speed cushions often have an unintended negative impact on bicyclists and emergency vehicles. The raised surfaces are uncomfortable for people riding bikes, and they add time to emergency responders. The cushions are often designed with cuts wide enough for the wheelbase of fire trucks and ambulances to pass through without slowing down. The dimensions of Richmond's typical fire trucks (quints) do not work well with speed cushions, even when cuts are designed.

Law enforcement

According to City code, how close can I legally park a car to an intersection?

It is legal to park 20 feet from a crosswalk. (The proposed bump-outs are within this range.)

It is legal to park 30 feet from a stop sign or stop bar in front of a traffic signal. (The proposed bump-outs are within this range.)

If the recommended design is approved, will there be more law enforcement for drivers?

The police may increase enforcement, but that is not under the control of Dept. of Public Works.

If the recommended design is approved, will there be more law enforcement for bicyclists?

The police may increase enforcement, but that is not under the control of Dept. of Public Works.

If the recommended design is approved, will there be more law enforcement for parking?

The police may increase enforcement, but that is not under the control of Dept. of Public Works.

Neighborhoodly behavior

If more people are walking and biking, who will clean up after dogs?

People are responsible for cleaning up after their own pets.

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Will my neighbors make excessive noise riding bikes?

Not compared to the noise their vehicle would make. Reducing noise pollution is one of the many benefits of a bike-friendly transportation network.

Will you force bicyclists to wear helmets and bright colors?

No. People are expected to follow the law when the bike, just as they are expected to follow the law when they drive. It may be helpful to note that bicycle safety studies have shown no direct connection between helmet use and bike safety. That is, bike helmets don't appear to be the life preserver they were once thought to be.

Why Floyd Avenue?

Floyd Avenue seems calm enough. Why not choose another location for an RVA Bike-Walk Street?

Floyd Avenue seems too congested. Why not choose another location for an RVA Bike-Walk Street?

The yearlong Richmond Strategic Multimodal Transportation Plan (SMTP) looked at multimodal travel throughout the city. After assessing the big picture, the SMTP identified Floyd Avenue as an opportunity to improve bicycle connectivity on city streets.

Regarding congestion, a "bike boulevard" or "bike-walk street" is designed for residential streets with low vehicle speeds and low volumes of vehicle traffic. People walking and riding bikes are given priority.

How much vehicular traffic is on Floyd Avenue, and how does that compare to parallel residential streets?

Vehicular traffic is typically summarized as Average Daily Traffic (ADT). ADT includes all vehicles during a 24-hour period, traveling both directions (if a 2-way street).

Floyd Avenue ADT is about 1000-1500 (estimated from turning movement counts).

Hanover Avenue ADT is about 2000 (estimated from turning movement counts).

Grove Avenue ADT is about 6500 west of Boulevard and 4800 east of Boulevard (according to VDOT).

Cary Street and Main Street/Ellwood Avenue ADT is about 10,000-12,000 each (according to VDOT).

The speed limit on Floyd Avenue is 25 mph. Does the City have any vehicle speed data?

The median vehicular speed on Floyd Avenue is 25 mph. A speed study was conducted in 2009 at several locations along Floyd Avenue and Grove Avenue. The average speed on Floyd Avenue was 21.7 mph. The average speed on Grove Avenue was 27.4 mph.

Will all the VCU students start biking on Floyd Avenue?

Probably not. But before-and-after studies of projects like this often show an increase in bike ridership by people living along the street. So you may see your neighbors riding bikes more often.

Livability

Do bike boulevard projects have an impact on property values?

Homeowners (city or suburbs) generally prefer homes on streets with lower traffic volumes and traffic speeds. Studies have been conducted since the early 1980s studying the relationship between traffic calming and property values. For bike boulevard-type treatments on Floyd Avenue, a 5-10 mph decrease in speed can correlate to a 1-2% increase in property value. Real estate agents and developers across the country are now advertising bicycle facilities as amenities.

Would an RVA Bike-Walk Street be designed with all ages and physical abilities in mind?

Yes. City staff often uses the phrase "keep vehicle traffic low and slow". Calming traffic helps everyone – not just young, athletic residents.

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These types of streets exist in other cities. What can we learn from them?

Short answer: a lot.

The Richmond Regional Planning District Commission supported the idea of a bike boulevard (or bike-walk street) in part because of the substantial amount of positive feedback around the United States. As an example, Portland, Oregon surveyed residents living along a bicycle boulevard (SE Salmon Street) after construction was complete. The majority of respondents felt had a positive impact on home values, quality of life, sense of community, noise, air quality, and convenience for bicyclists, safety for children, convenience for pedestrians, and traffic safety.

Here are some videos and documents worth exploring:

<http://www.streetfilms.org/portlands-bike-boulevards-become-neighborhood-greenways/>

<http://www.streetfilms.org/bicycle-boulevards4nyc/>

<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/bicycle-boulevards/>

http://issuu.com/neighborhoodgreenwayssea/docs/neighborhoodgreeways_toolkit_final

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/greenways.htm>

Ongoing discussion

Will the City create an online forum to discuss the project?

The Dept. of Public Works will be posting information about the project on its website, including design concepts shown tonight. However, the City does not plan to create an online forum or listserv specifically for the Floyd Avenue project.

I've attended a mobile workshop, citywide transportation meetings, and two Floyd Avenue meetings. Now what?

There are opportunities (including tonight) for the public to continue submitting comments and questions about the recommended design concept for Floyd Avenue.

- The study team will work with City Council members to collect and summarize the input at tonight's meeting. You may leave written comments on flip charts, comment sheets, printed maps, or by submitting an email to marianne.pitts@richmondgov.com. Comments will be considered before submitting a design to the Urban Design Commission.
- Project details will be posted on the City of Richmond Dept. of Public Works website.
- A recommended design plan will be submitted to the Urban Design Commission this summer. Public comments are welcome.
- Finally, a final recommended design will be presented to the City Planning Commission. These reviews have to occur before any construction would take place.

Is Floyd Avenue going to be better connected to Franklin Street?

The eastern terminus for this project is Laurel Street at Monroe Park. It does not include a plan to reconfigure the signalized intersection at Laurel Street. The proposed bike-walk street is just one part of the broader network of street upgrades being considered under the Bicycle Master Plan project. Franklin Street and other established bicycle routes are being evaluated for improvements.

How much would all of the recommendations cost?

If the project advances, the survey, final design, utility coordination, and construction is expected to cost \$521,250.

Of that amount, the city would pay \$104,250.