

# BROOK ROAD BIKE LANES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Overview

- The City of Richmond has proposed a protected bike lane for Brook Road, from Azalea Avenue to Charity Street, totaling 3.5 miles to be built in 2019, following the completion of utility work in the corridor. The project is fully funded and designed and has been in the design process since 2016.
- This project has been identified as a critical link in the city-wide bike network in the Richmond Master Plan (2000), Richmond Connects – The Strategic Multimodal Transportation Plan (2013), and the City of Richmond Bicycle Master Plan (2015).
- The design would use parked cars and plastic posts on each side of the street to protect bike riders in curb-running bike lanes while retaining on-street parking for residents and visitors.
- The project would be accomplished through a “road diet”, which would remove a lane of travel in each direction while maintaining intersection capacity by retaining critical turn lanes and thru lanes.
- Councilmembers Kim Gray and Chris Hilbert have proposed an ordinance (2018-194) that would prohibit installation of this project, to be considered by City Council in September.

## How will current and future traffic volumes be affected?

With the project, Brook Road will still be able to handle current and future traffic volumes. The current traffic volumes on Brook Road are 11,000 trips per day at the busiest point on the corridor. This is well below the road diet threshold of 20,000 trips per day recommended by the Federal Highway Administration. The additional trips generated by the apartments being built at Brook and Westwood will not impact the ability of Brook Road to carry this amount of traffic because the intersections have been designed to maximize throughput by retaining right- and left-turn lanes, and retaining both thru lanes at critical intersections. Because Brook Road can accommodate many more trips per day than currently exist, traffic is not projected to be diverted onto parallel and side streets.

## Will emergency response vehicle times be affected?

No, emergency response will not be adversely impacted. Brook Road will have defined “no parking” areas near intersections per the City Code that allow for full movements of emergency response vehicles in all directions. In addition, parking and buffer areas exist for non-emergency vehicles to pull over. The plastic posts will bend to allow for emergency vehicles to access curbside space as needed. The design is congruent with other cities’ uses and best practices for emergency response.

## What are the safety benefits of the project?

The posted speed limit on Brook Road is 35 MPH but 65% of drivers are traveling at 40 MPH or faster. 20% of drivers are traveling at 45-50 MPH, and 5% are traveling 50-55 MPH. If a car traveling at 40 MPH hits a person, there is an 85 % probability that person will die. Safety benefits for all users include:

- For drivers: slower traffic speeds, resulting in less severe crashes. Better sight lines at intersections and driveways. Signal timing will be more efficient at intersections. Turn pockets and thru lanes will be preserved at critical intersections to maintain level of service and efficient movement.
- For bicyclists: bike lanes will be protected using plastic posts and parked cars. Slower traffic speeds.
- For pedestrians and wheelchair users : shorter crossing distances, marked crosswalks, slower traffic.

*I'm a wheelchair user who navigates Ginter Park, Seminary, Bellevue, and Laburnum Park in order to access stores, doctor's appointments, and dining. My power chair is about the only independence I have left after being on the receiving end of a number of car crashes in my life. Please help calm traffic, reduce crossing distances, and provide safe places for people who bike. Everything we can do to allow people to safely transport themselves without relying on a car makes our community safer, more equitable, and more livable.*

– Lisa Sheffield, Northside resident, in an email to Council President Chris Hilbert (7/2/2018)

### Are there equity benefits to underserved areas?

Yes, it will result in a safer street for people who have to bike and walk for transportation. An average of one in five Richmond households (20%) do not have a car at home, which requires them to get around by walking, biking, and using public transportation. Of the households in the Census tracts along the project corridor, the percentage of households without a car increases to 28%.

The poverty rate for the Ginter Park Census tract is 15.5%. Chamberlayne/Brookland Parkway is 13.7%. Chamberlayne/Overbrook/Belvidere is 30.7%. People living the Chamberlayne/Overbrook/Belvidere Census tract are primarily people of color.

Nationally, people of color are more likely than other groups to say they ride bikes for transportation, rather than recreation. Although most Americans say they would like to bike more often than they do, people of color are most likely to say that protected bike lanes would make them more likely get them on a bike.

The lowest-income Americans bike far more for transportation than people in the highest income brackets, largely because many low-income people cannot afford to own a car.

The people living along the Chamberlayne Ave corridor are within easy biking distance of Brook Road and the proposed protected bike lane would give them safe access into downtown, jobs, and essential services. Furthermore, additional federal funding will focus on pedestrian safety improvements along Chamberlayne Ave to complement the new frequent GRTC transit service along the corridor.

### How has the community been engaged thus far?

Community engagement on this project has been ongoing since 2013, first with the Strategic Multimodal Transportation Plan, then the Bicycle Master Plan in 2015, project-specific design public meetings in 2016 and 2017, and several informal public meetings with neighborhood associations and Councilmembers in 2017 and 2018. The project has also been mentioned by several media outlets. Public engagement on the part of the Department of Public Works and resident groups continues today.

### Can this funding be used for other things the city needs?

No. Construction of this project is financed 100% through federal transportation safety improvement funds that cannot be used for schools, social services, etc. The City has already spent \$85,000 on the design of the project, which will be lost if the ordinance to block this project is passed.

### Is this project permanent?

Not necessarily. The Department of Public Works and the Virginia Department of Transportation will conduct before-and-after studies to monitor effectiveness of the project. If it doesn't work as intended, the paint and posts can be removed and Brook Road can be returned to its original state.

## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

### **To voice your support or opposition to this project, contact:**

Council President Chris Hilbert  
3rd District  
[Chris.Hilbert@Richmondgov.com](mailto:Chris.Hilbert@Richmondgov.com)  
804.646.6055

Councilmember Kim Gray  
2nd District  
[Kim.Gray@Richmondgov.com](mailto:Kim.Gray@Richmondgov.com)  
804.646.6532

### **For general questions about this project, contact:**

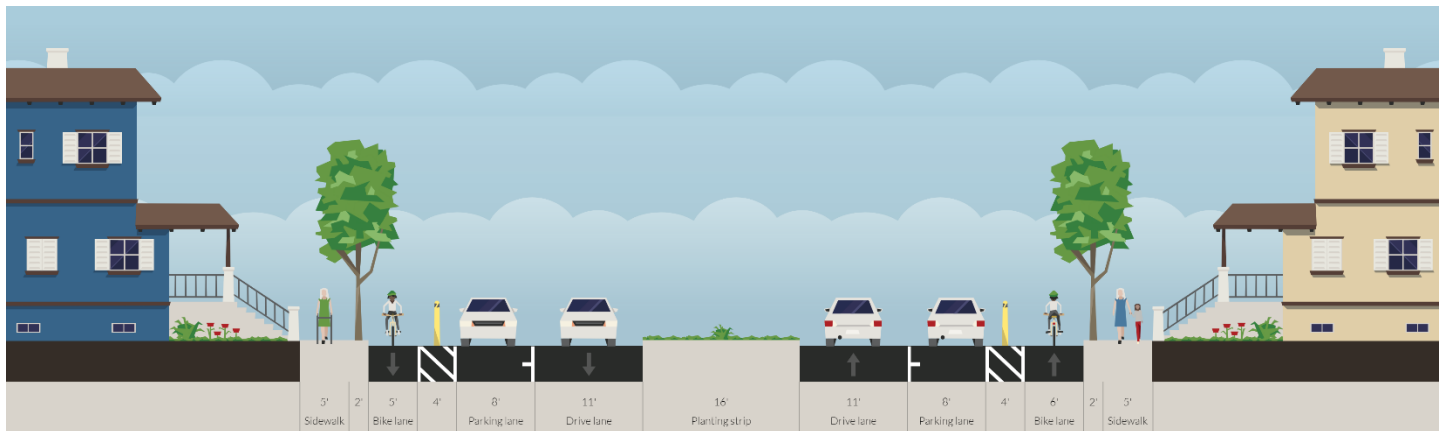
Jakob Helmboldt, Pedestrian, Bicycle and Trails Coordinator, Richmond Department of Public Works  
[Jakob.Helmboldt@Richmondgov.com](mailto:Jakob.Helmboldt@Richmondgov.com)  
Current design can be found at: <http://www.richmondgov.com/bikeped>

### **To help advocate for completion of this project, contact:**

Louise Lockett, Lead Organizer, Bike Walk RVA  
[Louise@sportsbackers.org](mailto:Louise@sportsbackers.org)

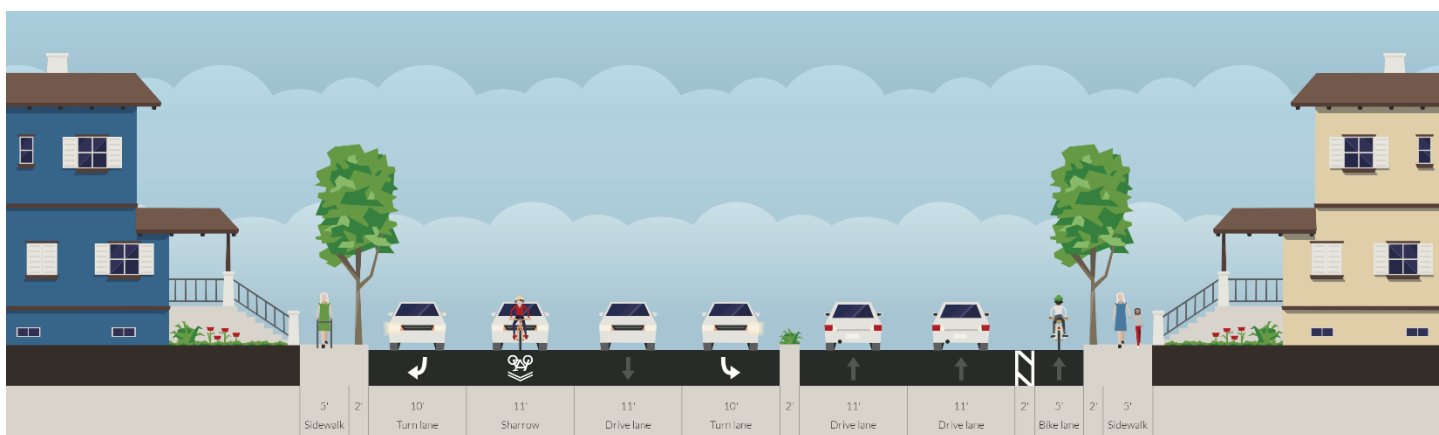
# BROOK ROAD BIKE LANE: PROPOSED DESIGN

## Proposed: Brook Road typical segment cross-section



- On-street parking retained
- Bike lane protected by parked cars and plastic posts
- Less exposure to traffic for people walking across the street
- Single drive lane helps to slow traffic speeds

## Proposed: Intersection approach heading southbound on Brook at intersections of Azalea Avenue, Laburnum Avenue, and Brookland Parkway



- Three of the busiest intersections on Brook Road
- Right turn, left turn, and both thru lanes preserved to keep traffic moving efficiently through intersections
- All of the other signalized intersections (including Westwood, Lombardy, etc.) have 3 or 4 approach lanes to prevent traffic from backing up at intersections
- Bike lane drops approaching intersection, becomes sharrows
- People on bikes ride in mixed traffic approaching the intersections