

Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting: December 19, 2023

Minutes Prepared By: Ruby Eskenazi, City of Norfolk

1. Purpose of Meeting: To provide project updates and feedback on St. Paul's Transformation Area project, including Blue Greenway/Elizabeth River Trail, Kindred Art Project, People First update, and more.

2. Attendance at Meeting			
Mr. Alphonso Albert – present	Mr. Bruce Brady – absent	Ms. LaEunice Brown – absent	Ms. Ebony Burnham – present
Rev. James Curran – present	Ms. Regina Daye – absent	Dr. Rhonda Alexander – absent	Mr. William Harrell – present
Dr. Kirk Houston – present	Ms. Deirdre Love – absent	Mr. Don Musacchio – absent	Councilman John Paige – present
Dr. Glenn Porter – present	Councilwoman Danica Royster – present	Ms. Tara Saunders – absent	Mr. Kevin Murphy – present
Mr. Christopher Tan – absent	Pastor Travis Barnes- absent	Dr. Doreathea White – absent	Mr. Brian Owens – present
Ms. Iris Lundy – absent	Ms. Barbara Hamm Lee – present	Mr. Christopher Bryant – present	

3. Agenda

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| I. Welcome/Opening Comments | 6:00 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barbara Hamm Lee, SPAC Liaison• Councilpersons Danica Royster and John Paige | |
| II. Introduction of Executive Director, NRHA/Remarks | 6:05 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alphonso Albert, NRHA• Nathan Simms, NRHA | |
| III. Blue Greenway/Elizabeth River Trail Update | 6:15 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mel Price, WPA | |
| IV. Kindred Art Project Update | 6:35 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Susan Perry, DHCD | |

Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

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| V. People First Update | 6:45 |
| • Nicole Brown, USI | |
| VI. Open Discussion | 6:55 |
| • SPAC Members | |
| VII. Adjournment | 7:30 |
| • SPAC Members | |

4. Meeting Notes, Decisions, Issues

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ○ Welcome/Opening Comments | 6:00 |
| ○ Barbara Hamm Lee, SPAC Liaison | |
| ○ Councilwoman Danica Royster, Chair | |
| ○ Councilman John Paige, Co-Chair | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ms. Hamm Lee welcomed the committee and read the attendance roster.Councilwoman Royster opened her remarks by expressing her appreciation to everyone for attending the December in-person meeting. In her announcement, she outlined the following points:The upcoming SPAC meeting in January 2024 will dive deep into minority and women-owned business (MWBE) participation numbers in the St. Paul's Transformation project. This will review the current state of participation and explore strategies to enhance Economic Inclusion in the project. She also emphasized the continuing important work in 2024, that she is looking forward to doing more of this work which is the work of the people.Councilman Paige greeted and thanked everyone for their work this year and extended his best wishes for the holiday season and the upcoming new year. In his announcement, he highlighted the following points:He has extended invitations to local minority developers to participate in the December SPAC meeting and future meetings in 2024 in response to development challenges identified by the committee in 2023. He elaborated on the value of integrating the expertise of professionals experienced in city businesses and infrastructure development. This integration will provide guidance and serve as a valuable resource to enhance effectiveness and inclusivity in all phases of development. | |
| ○ Introduction of Executive Director, NRHA/Remarks | 6:05 |
| ○ Alphonso Albert, NRHA | |
| ○ Nathan Simms, NRHA | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mr. Albert greeted the committee and introduced Nathan Simms, the new Executive Director of Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA). He spoke about the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and the internal search committee that was created to identify prospective executive directors to fill the vacancy. Mr. Albert expressed confidence in Mr. Simms, highlighting | |

Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

his efforts in establishing collaborations with city officials, including the Deputy City Manager, Ms. Pope and the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, Dr. Susan Perry.

- Mr. Nathan Simms greeted the committee and reflected on his initial visits to Norfolk in October, which marked the beginning of his transition as Executive Director of NRHA. He said those initial visits were instrumental in establishing communication with his team, board members, and city leaders. Mr. Simms acknowledged the significant impact of NRHA on the city over time. He stressed the need for proactive leadership to initiate development opportunities, aiming to shape the city's future for the next 10, 15, and 20 years.
- Mr. Simms noted the community's interest in inclusive and innovative development opportunities and announced NRHA's plan to launch a developer forum by the end of the first quarter of FY24. He stated that professional training will play a key role in enhancing businesses' ability to compete in procurement, from paperwork management to meeting bonding requirements. Similarly, another focus will be job training opportunities to facilitate employment readiness and preparation for businesses and individual job seekers. Mr. Simms emphasized the interconnectedness of NRHA with other city departments, such as DHCD, highlighting the NRHA's role in supporting various city development projects and contributing to the broader goal of city-wide development.

III. Blue Greenway/Elizabeth Trail Update

6:15

○ *Mel Price, WPA*

- Ms. Price greeted the committee and introduced herself as an architect and urban designer on the St. Paul's Transformation project and previous projects like Old Huntersville. She also shared her role as a founding member of the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation. Following a request from Councilwoman Royster, Ms. Price and Kendra Green, the Executive Director of the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation, would discuss the Elizabeth River Trail.
- Ms. Price recalled the previous SPAC meeting, highlighting the discussion of the stunning 22-acre Blue Greenway Resilience Park. She emphasized the park's close proximity to the existing Elizabeth River Trail and the potential for connecting them. To encourage further discussion, she suggested exploring the idea of establishing links between the Trail and the Blue Greenway Park.
- Ms. Green provided the committee with historical and geographic information about the Elizabeth River Trail and the creation of the nonprofit foundation. She noted that the trail was constructed about 20 years ago, spans 10.5 miles, connecting 28 neighborhoods from Norfolk State University to the Port of Virginia. Designed for walking, running, biking, and scooting, the trail's mission is to promote wellness, attract visitors and boost local businesses.
- Ms. Green detailed the trail's origin, noting that the vision of the trail began 10 years before its construction. The Historical Preservation Society initially aimed to connect various parts of the city to downtown. She further explained that in 2016, the nonprofit Elizabeth River Trail Foundation was established to support the city and business community's goals of investing in developments that retain local talent and strengthen the community. The mission includes connecting major economic

Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

institutions such as NSU, ODU, EVMS, and Sentara Medical Complex through an inclusive and resilient urban riverfront trail.

- Ms. Green outlined the responsibilities of the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation, which include master planning, fundraising, marketing, and programming of the trail. She emphasized the foundation's collaboration with over 60 community partners to ensure the trail's accessibility, highlighting the annual sponsorship of approximately 100 free events. Notable features include the Glow Line, a section of the trail that glows in the dark and is unique to the East Coast. The foundation envisions creating a series of connected kayak launches, with one already at Plum Point Park and another anticipated next year at Larchmont Library. Ongoing programs include the Trail Ambassador program, comprising volunteers who patrol the trail to keep it safe and clean. Additional efforts include trail beautification and cleanup projects, planting flowers and trees, and improving wayfinding and signage. Ms. Green concluded her presentation by introducing DJ Bee, a small business owner and trail advocate, to discuss the trail events and programming throughout the year.
- DJ Bee introduced himself as owner of Freshtopia record store and Fresh Radio on 35th Street in Norfolk, one of only 30 black-owned record stores in the country, and likely to be the only store with a radio station inside. DJ Bee shared that he started Freshtopia on 35th Street in 2019, the only street with a center bike lane. He expressed his passion for bicycling, mentioning his regular use of the trail and the bike lanes to commute to work, and his partnership with the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation to create the Live Like Fresh Boombox Bike Ride. The bike ride is a weekly event occurring every Saturday morning beginning at Freshtopia, and consists of a casual ride around Norfolk through the bike lanes and the Elizabeth River Trail. DJ Bee described the bike ride as a wellness program, encouraging individuals to engage in physical activity and social interaction, away from their phones and routine life, for a couple of hours on Saturday mornings.
- Ms. Green revisited the suggestion of expanding the Elizabeth River Trail's inclusiveness and equity. She discussed the diverse amenities at different trailheads, tailored to reflect the neighborhoods of the trail they represent. The amenities include features such as a meditative labyrinth, a kayak launch, obstacle course, bike racks, trash cans, and hydration station. She mentioned the last spring enhancements on the east end of the trail in between Harbor Park and Norfolk State on Park Avenue included a little free library, six tree plantings, a pollinator garden, and a converted boat serving as a community needs pantry, in partnership with the neighboring St. James Church. Upcoming improvements this year are scheduled for the Larchmont Library Trailhead. Ms. Green emphasized the foundation's commitment to inclusiveness and equity in trail development. This commitment, she noted, has led to considering the ways the Elizabeth River Trail could connect with the Blue Greenway of the St. Paul's Transformation Area project.
- Mel Price discussed a meeting held on the trail last August where 35 representatives from various partnerships and committees attended. The focus was identifying potential connections between the Elizabeth River Trail and the Blue Greenway. Two feasible options were proposed: the first involves a route along Holt Street, through Tidewater Drive, connecting across the new bridge; the second suggests a left turn on Park Avenue, leading to an off-road greenway path running under the interstate to connect at the bridge.

Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

- Mel Price invited questions from the committee and inquired about their interest in further exploring the potential connection between the Elizabeth River Trail and the Blue Greenway. She disclosed that although the foundation does not currently have a dedicated budget for this project, they would be willing to work on securing funding with their partners if there is community interest.
- Councilwoman Royster thanked Mel Price and her team for the presentation. She encouraged a collaboration with People First to access the needs and preferences of the residents, particularly those who will be returning to Kindred. This collaboration is to gather resident feedback on the proposed connection between the Elizabeth River Trail and Blue Greenway Park. Councilwoman Royster emphasized the importance of accessibility and community connectivity. She suggested integrating the trail with local sororities and organizations like Black Girls Run Track. Councilwoman Royster concluded by advising Ms. Price's team to work with People First to facilitate surveys, host residential meetings, and circulate questionnaires to obtain resident preferences and ideas regarding the trail connection.
- Councilman Paige commended the presentation, expressing his support for Councilwoman Royster's suggestion to collaborate with People First. He emphasized the importance of including residents of the community in this development phase. Councilman Paige also highlighted that he liked the prospects of the health and well-being that can be achieved through riding bikes and making that accessible to an underserved community by connecting the trail to the new development.

IV. Kindred Art Project Update

6:35

- *Susan Perry, DHCD*

- Dr. Perry provided the committee with an update on the Kindred Art Project on Block 19 (Reunion) and Block 20 (Origin). The project is to supply the developers with art from the local community to be framed and showcased in the interior of the buildings and common spaces. The project was initiated by Councilwoman Royster during her meeting with Emily Franklin to engage the community in creating the art. Dr. Perry noted that the call for artists was issued, and various local nonprofits and a group responsible for reviewing submissions were engaged in the process. As a result, 20 artists, all local to Norfolk, have been commissioned to create 58 art pieces for the project. All art produced will be canvas paintings specifically expressing themes representative of the community.
- Councilwoman Royster interjected that the artists names will be released at the January 2024 SPAC meeting.

V. People First Update

6:45

- *Nicole Brown, USI*

- Ms. Brown greeted the committee and proceeded with her update on the Key Service Pillars of Education, Economic Mobility, Health, and Housing Stability in relation to the former Tidewater Gardens residents during the redevelopment phase. Ms. Brown highlighted the success of the first Holiday Extravaganza party for the former Tidewater Gardens residents on December 15th attended

Mayor's St. Paul's Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

by 290 residents and supported by SWaM business vendors. Moreover, the Club Rudolph campaign, launched in November 2022, collected gifts for teenagers 13 and older. Ms. Brown said People First provided Christmas gifts for 119 families this year, including 253 children and 53 youth aged 13-18. Ms. Brown concluded her presentation by calling attention to the Housewarming Supply Drive, which provided essential items for residents moving into their new homes.

VI. Open Discussion

6:55

- *SPAC Members*
- Councilwoman Royster inquired about coordinating a tour of St. Paul's. She suggested selecting a SPAC meeting on Tuesday and offering multiple daytime slots for committee members to tour the project and view a new residence at their convenience.
- Ms. Hamm Lee confirmed that she would send out the available dates in January for the committee members' selection.
- Councilwoman Royster inquired if a back-to-school supply drive was being coordinated after Christmas break. Councilman Paige said he would share the contact information and/or flyer about a back-to-school drive already taking place with USI.

VII. Adjournment

7:30

- Ms. Hamm Lee asked if there were any further comments or questions. There were no comments or questions. Ms. Hamm Lee stated that the meeting was adjourned and thanked everyone for coming.



St. Paul's Advisory Committee Meeting

**Location: Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore
December 19, 2023**

Agenda

Welcome | 6:00

*Barbara Hamm Lee, SPAC Liaison
Councilwoman Danica Royster, Co-Chair
Councilman John Paige, Co-Chair*

Introduction of Executive Director, NRHA/Remarks | 6:05

*Alphonso Albert, Chair, NRHA Board
Nathan Simms, Executive Director, NRHA*

Blue Greenway /Elizabeth Trail Update| 6:15

Mel Price, WPA

Kindred Art Project Update| 6:35

Susan Perry, DHCD

People First Update| 6:45

Nicole Brown, USI

Open Discussion/Closing Remarks/Holiday Fellowship| 6:55

SPAC Members

Adjournment | 7:30

Barbara Hamm Lee, SPAC Liaison



Introduction of Executive Director, NRHA

- *Introduction of Executive Director, NRHA/Remarks*

- *Alphonso Albert, Chair*
- *Nathan Simms, Executive Director*

Nathan Simms

- NRHA has selected Nathan Frank Simms Jr. to lead the organization as Executive Director.
- Simms will relocate from Fulton County, Georgia, where he most recently served as Manager – Federal Programs for their Department of Community Development.
- Simms brings over 20 years of housing and community development experience to NRHA. He has a Master's Degree in Public Administration from American University.
- Early in his career, Simms spent over a decade working for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Following his time at HUD, he was Deputy Director for the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).





Blue Greenway/Elizabeth Trail Update

- *Blue Greenway /Elizabeth Trail Update*

Mel Price, WPA



Our mission is to create an
inclusive and **resilient**
urban riverfront trail that **connects** and **inspires** people and businesses in the region.

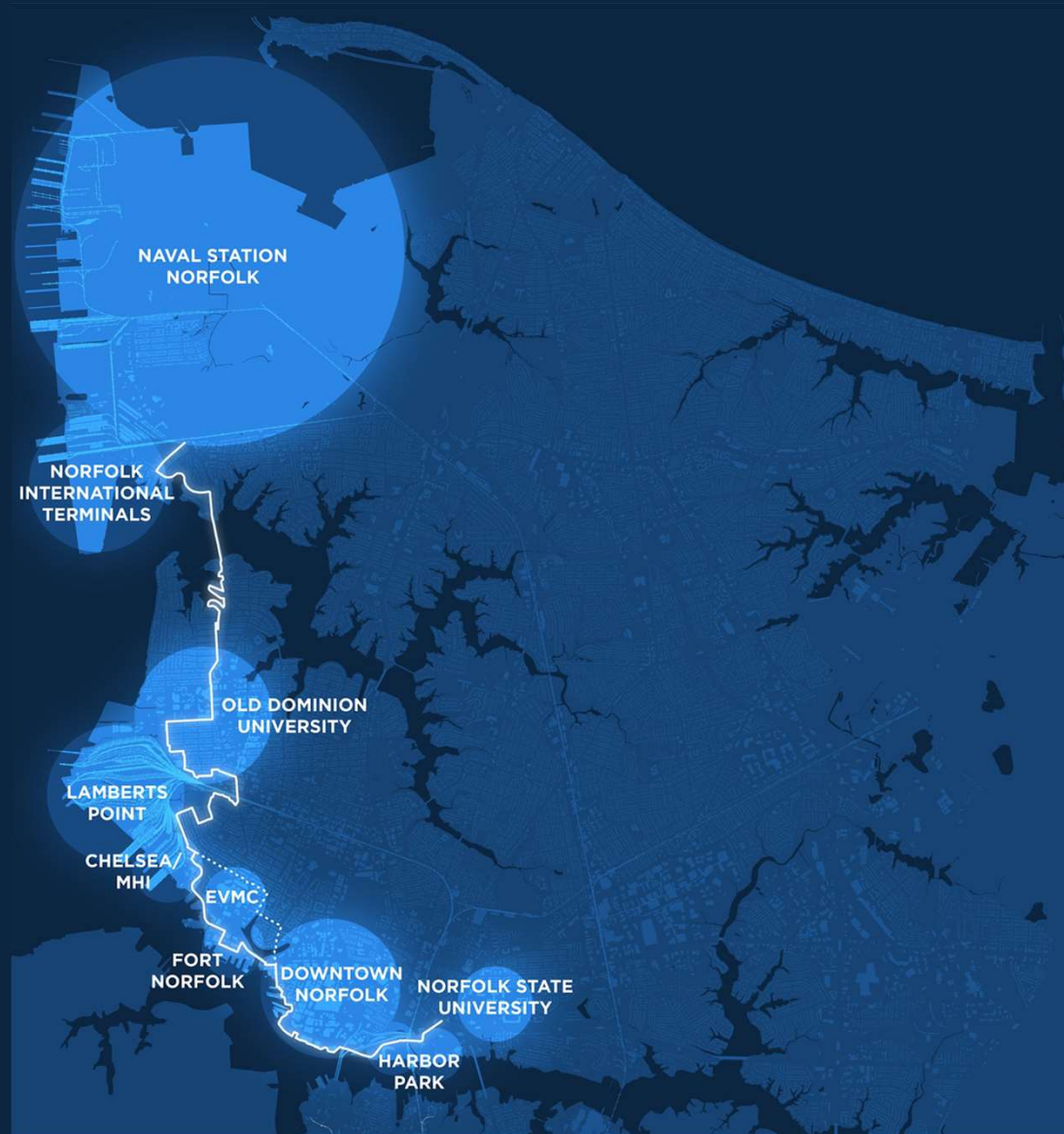
An aerial photograph of a lush green park area with a winding river, stone-lined paths, and many trees. People are seen walking and sitting on the grass. The scene is captured during the "golden hour" of late afternoon, with warm lighting.

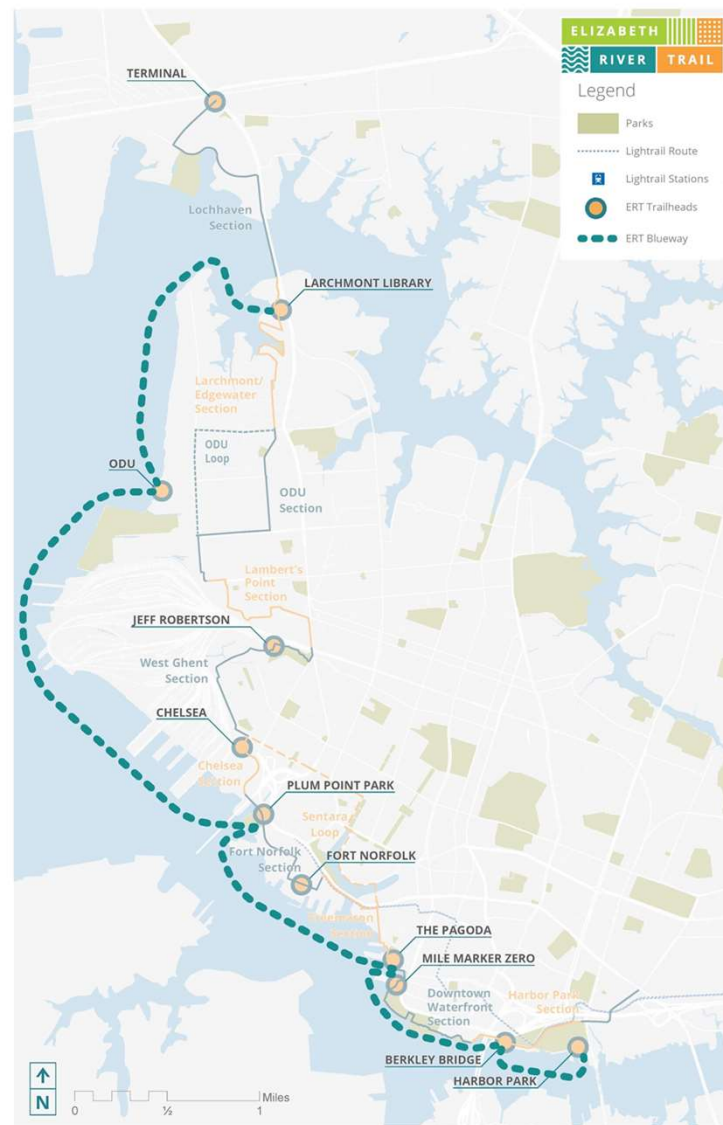
10.5 MILES SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

[DONATE NOW](#)[LEARN MORE](#)



The Elizabeth River Trail Connects Anchor Institutions, Major Employers & Economic Generators along the NIC.



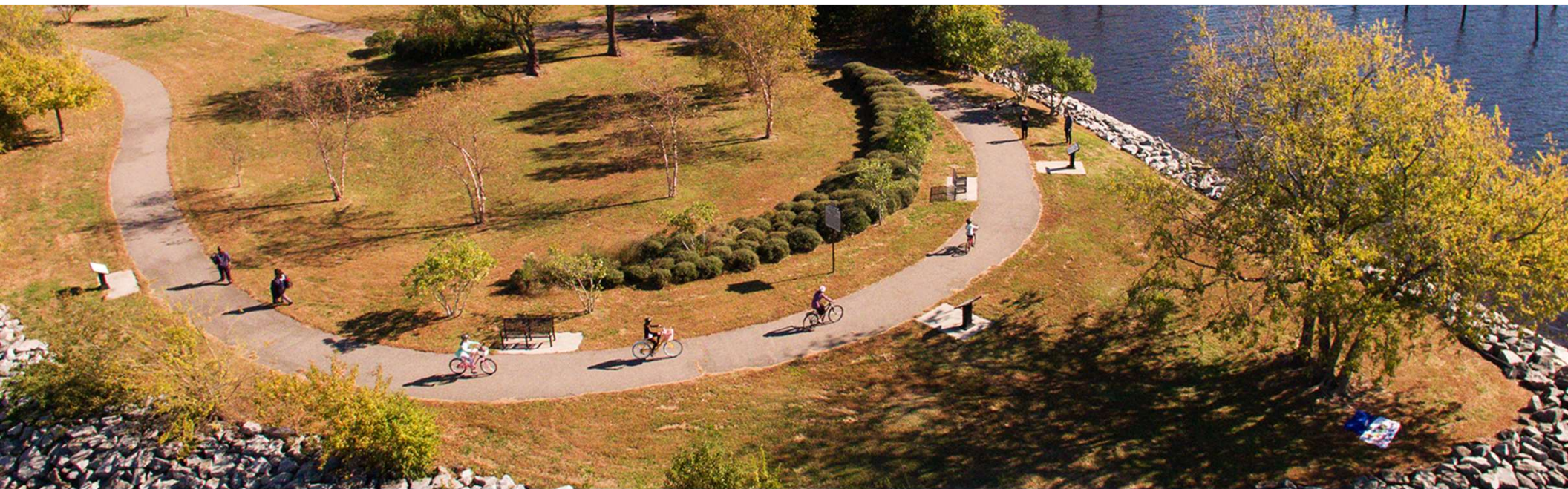
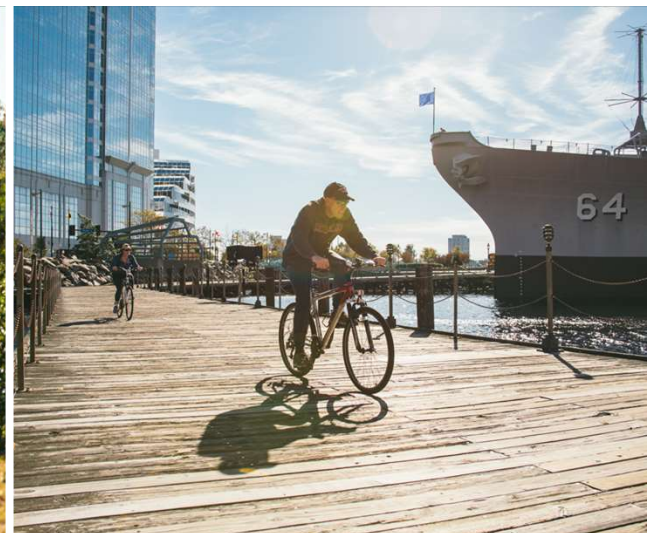


ELIZABETH RIVER TRAIL - PROPOSED BLUEWAY



The Goal: Create an connected 10.5 mile trail for Norfolk and the region

- Promote a **family-friendly** trail for physical, social, and mental health
- Connect neighborhoods and **highlight unique Norfolk features**
- Provide additional amenities to encourage usage at **Trailheads**
- Attract more people to **live here, work here and start companies**
- **Increase spending** from tourists/regional visitors to the area
- Be a **partner** to the Office of Coastal Resilience and a **model** for trails in coastal areas.



Volunteer Corps - Adopt-a-spot cleanup and planting



Award Winning Meadow & Orchard



Trail Ambassador Program

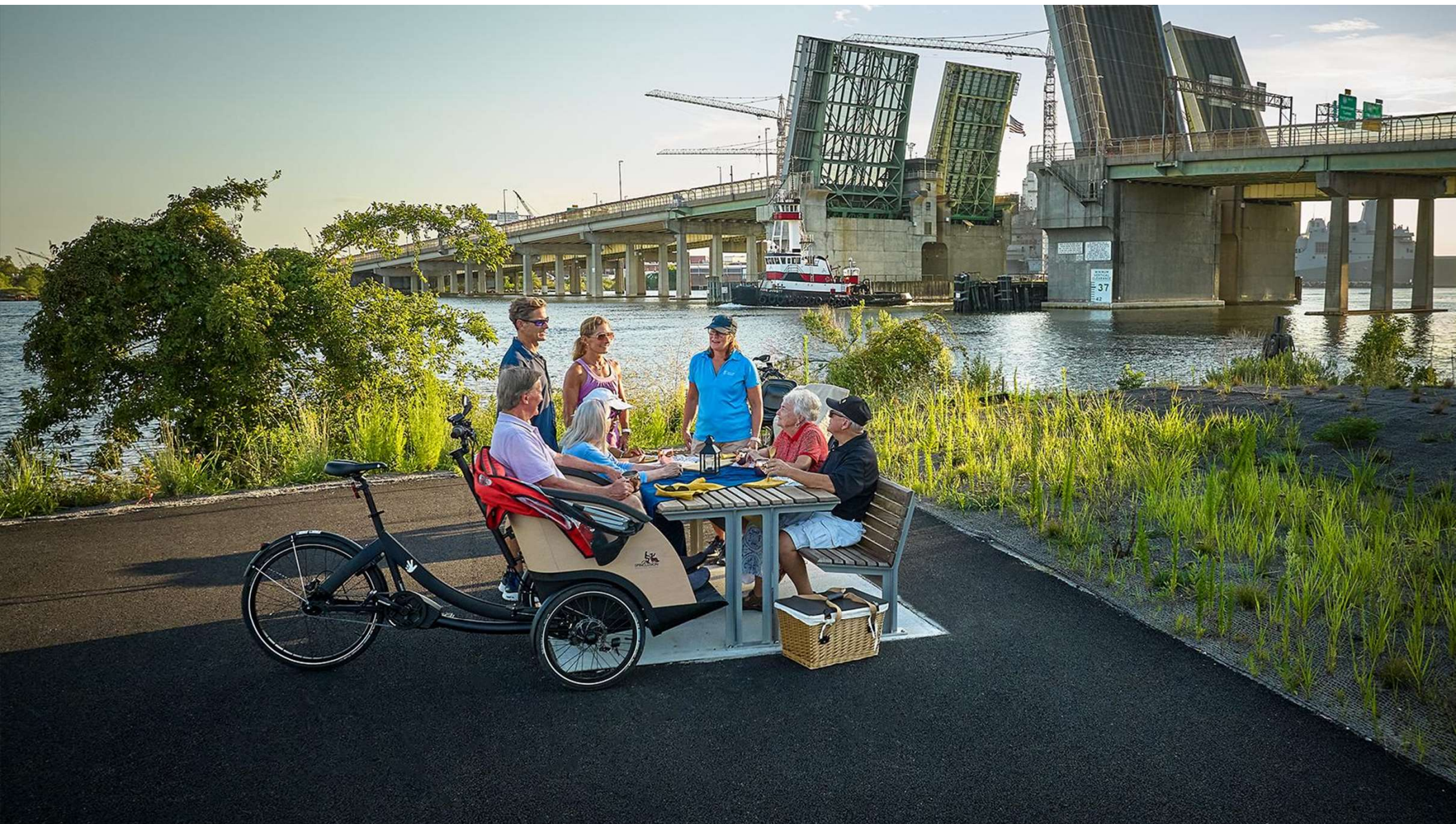
- Volunteers with Vests!
- Ambassadors observe, assist, and inform
- Four hour per month time commitment - you set your own schedule
- Training consists of one (1) class session; two (2) on-trail rides
- 20 ambassadors currently patrolling

Email hello@elizabethrivdertrail.org
for more information



Signage: Installation of 500+ new signs is complete.



















Join Us
October 3
 Link in Bio to Register

#trailgrazingBINGO

PIZZA	MYSTERY CLUE COMING SEPT 17*	BREAKFAST TIME	SUNSET SNACKS	COFFEE
BRUNCH IT UP	TACOS	MYSTERY CLUE COMING OCT 6*	ERT NEWSLETTER SIGN UP	GO GLOBAL FOR LUNCH
PATIO N CHILL SOCIALLY DISTANT OUTDOOR DINING	BBQ	Report SHARE THIS CONTEST TAG @ERTNORFOLK #TRAILGRAZING2020	BURGER	SWEET TREAT
ITALIAN DINNER	PHOTO OF PICNIC ON ERT	PICK UP TO-GO FROM A TRAILSIDE RESTAURANT	DONATE TO ERT FOUNDATION	MYSTERY CLUE COMING SEPT 29*
SHOW US THE VEGGIES	MYSTERY CLUE COMING SEPT 22*	BITE W REX	CHEESE PLATTER / CHARCUTERIE	BEER WINE MOCKTAIL

*MYSTERY CLUES WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON ERT'S INSTAGRAM STORY ON THE DATES MENTIONED ABOVE

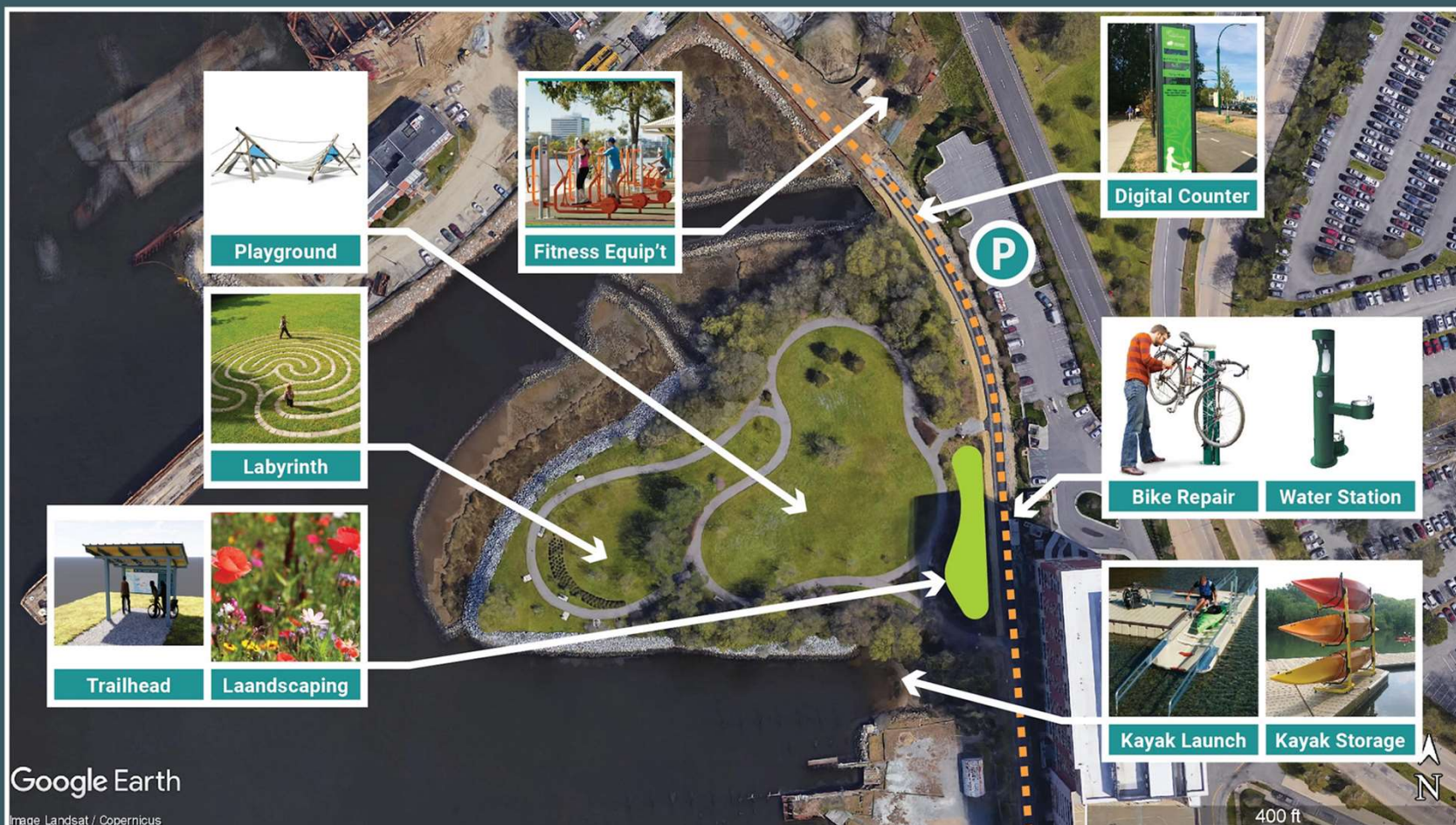
©ERTNORFOLK | #TRAILGRAZING2020



43rd Annual Elizabeth River Run

Saturday, May 28, 2021





Google Earth

Image Landsat / Copernicus

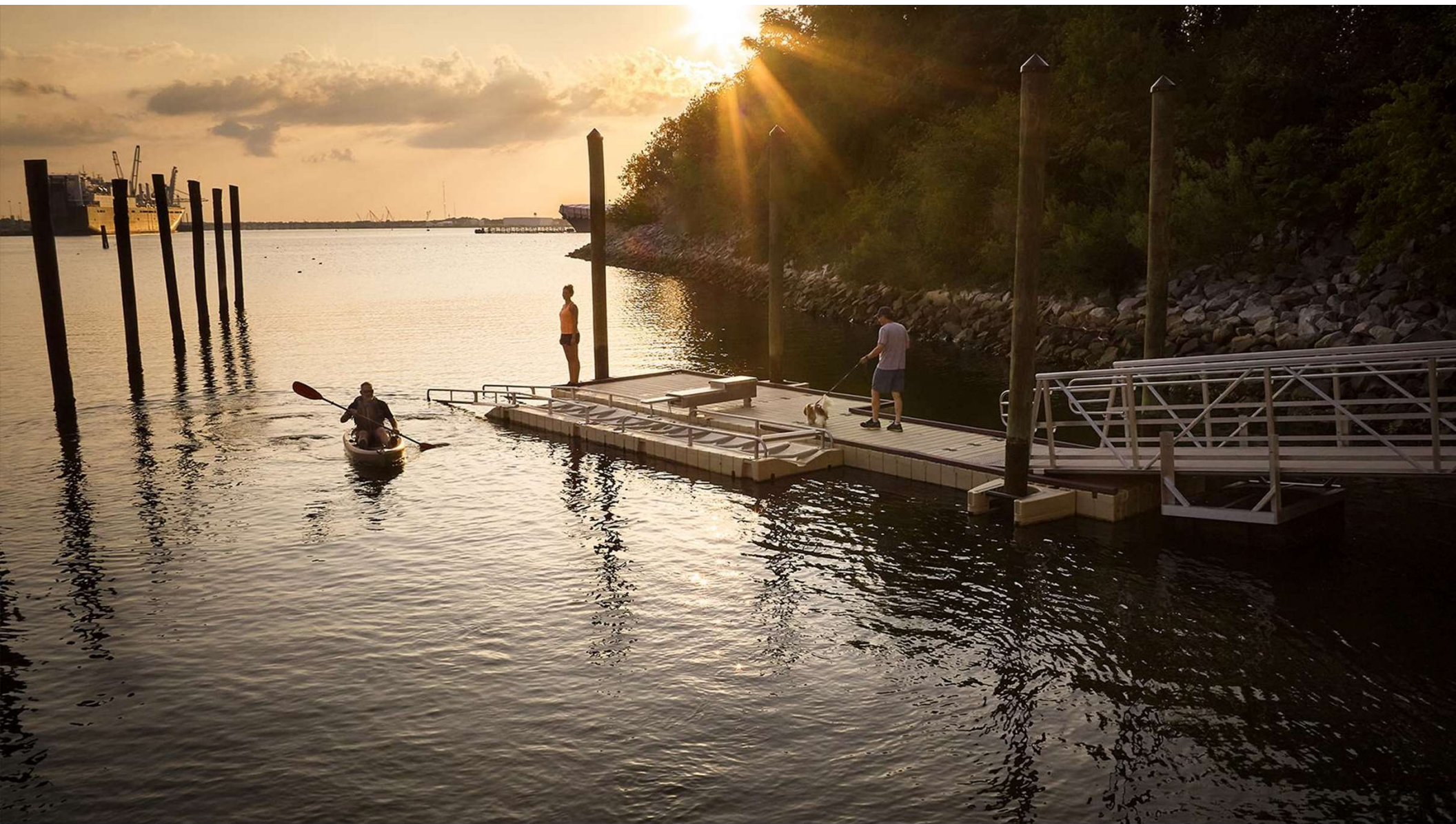
Plum Point Park Trailhead









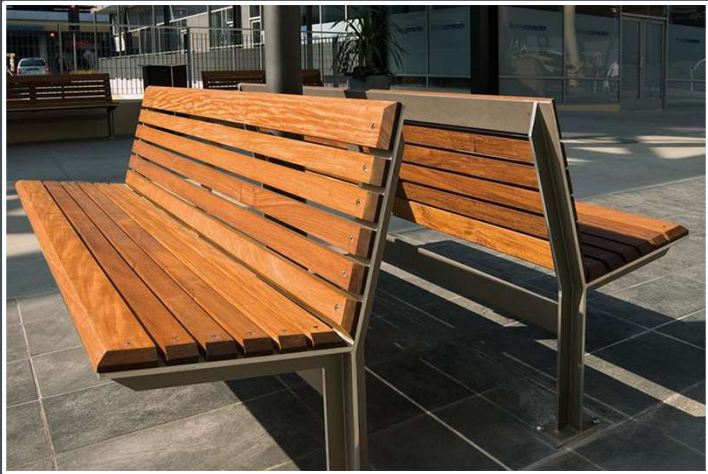




Obstacle Course



Trailhead Shelter



The Elizabeth River Trail will build
a trail as **diverse** and **vibrant** as
the **land** it sits on, the **river** it
follows, and the **community** it
serves.

Would you like your neighborhood to be connected to the ERT?

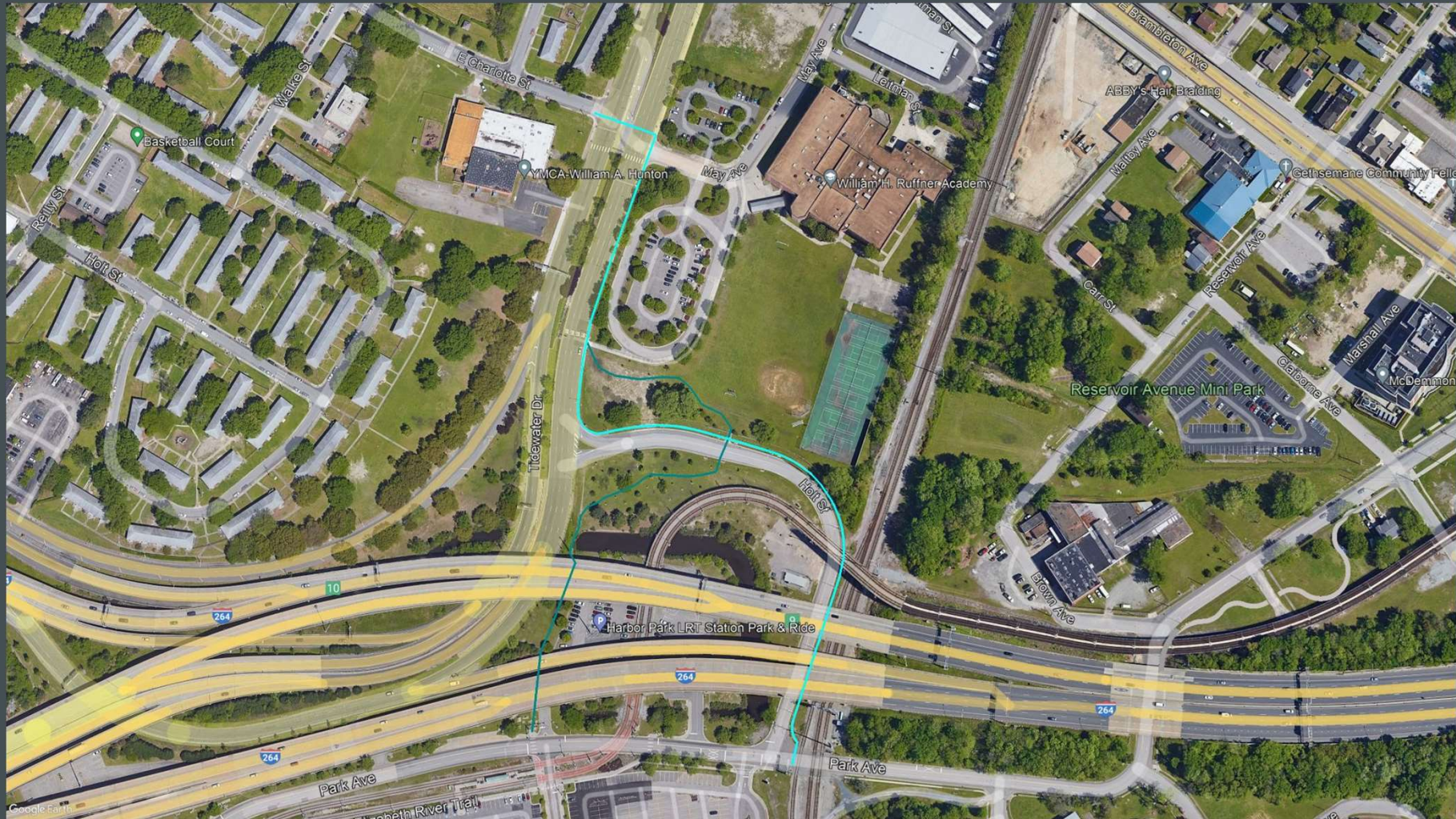
We walked it to see what the options could be...



Potential Trail Connection options for St. Paul's/Kindred



Potential Trail connection options for St. Paul's/Kindred





elizabethrivertrail.org



Kindred Art Project Update

- *Kindred Art Project Update*

Dr. Susan Perry, DHCD

Kindred Art Project Update

- 20 Artists commissioned for 58 artworks in collaboration with First Baptist Church, Boys & Girls Club, and Teens with a Purpose.
- Framed pieces showcased in common areas of two buildings.
- Expected completion by January 5th with the installation within the following month.
- Anticipate a gathering to celebrate the properties and art project in the spring once the buildings are leased up and occupied.
- Upcoming: 'Make Your Mark' project post-installation





People First Update

- *People First Update*

Nicole Brown, USI

Key Service Pillars and Results Statements

Education: All children and youth in Tidewater Gardens are ready for school, thrive in and out of school, graduate from high school, and are prepared for college, career and life.



Economic Mobility: All households in Tidewater Gardens, before and after redevelopment, are economically independent.



Health: All children and adults living in Tidewater Gardens, before and after redevelopment, are mentally and physically healthy.

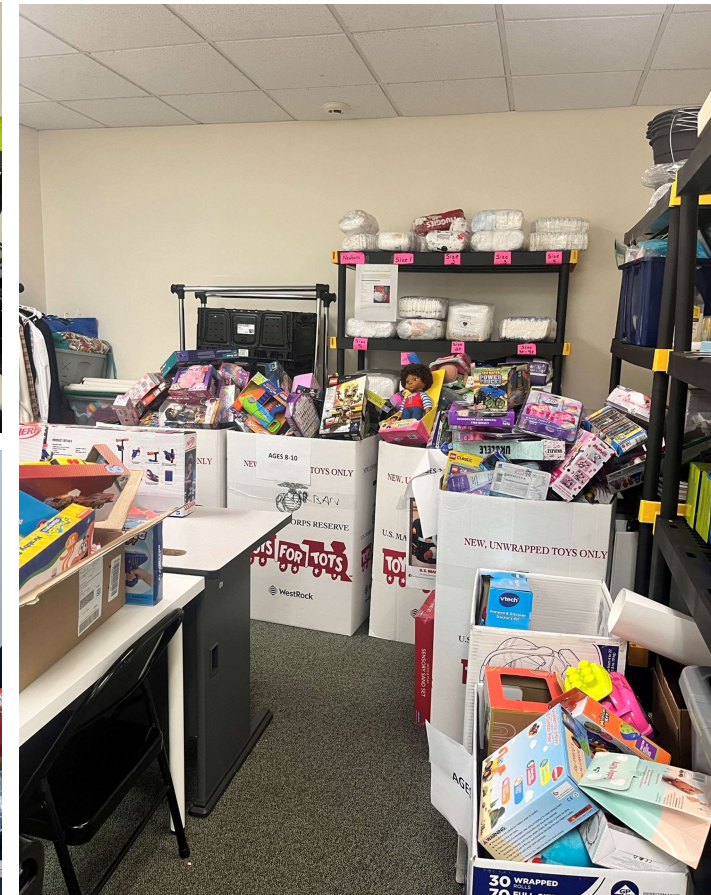


Housing Stability: All Tidewater Gardens households remain stably housed in their housing of choice.



Club Rudolph

- People First USI launched the Club Rudolph campaign to collect holiday gifts for teenagers 13 and older in November 2022.
 - Donations received from community partners and supplemented with People First funding
- People First provided Christmas gifts for 119 families this year including 253 children ages 1-12 and 53 youth 13-18.



People First Holiday Extravaganza



First Holiday Extravaganza:

- Date: December 15, 2023
- Attendance: 290
- Door Prizes and Giveaways: *Nauticus Tickets, Virginia Zoo Annual Memberships, Virginia Symphony Tickets, Tide Baseball Game Tickets and more*
- Performances by Teens with a Purpose
- Holiday Dinner catered by Coaches Sports Grill
- Photo Stations and Story Readings with Mr. & Mrs. Claus
- Bingo Game & Elf On The Shelf competition
- Gift Bags for all attendants!



People First Holiday Extravaganza

PEOPLE FIRST
EMPOWERED BY
URBAN STRATEGIES, INC.



People First Holiday Extravaganza





Open Discussion

- *Open Discussion/Closing Remarks/Holiday Fellowship*

SPAC Members



Adjournment

