

# STATE OF THE TRAIL

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT ON THE APPOMATTOX RIVER



February 25, 2020  
Meeting Summary

# Meeting Purpose

- Regional update and review of success and implementation of the Appomattox River Trail Master Plan
- Introduction to a new series of regional forums titled *Collective Impact on the Appomattox River*
- Small group discussion

Thank you to the John Randolph Foundation for hosting the regional meeting!

# Who was there?

- **Local Government:** Counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie and Prince George, Cities of Colonial Heights, Hopewell and Petersburg
- **Public Health:** Crater Health District, Petersburg Healthy Options Partnership
- **Military:** Ft Lee
- **Regional:** Crater Planning District Commission, Plan RVA, James River Soil & Water Conservation District, Regional Economic Development: Virginia's Gateway Region
- **Foundations/Nonprofits:** The John Randolph Foundation, The Cameron Foundation and Virginia Capital Trail Foundation
- **Backbone Organization:** FOLAR
- **Facilitating:** UVA Institute for Engagement and Negotiation
- **Invited (unable to attend):** Virginia State University, National Park Service, Tri-Cities MPO, Appomattox River Soil & Water Conservation District, Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, Department of Forestry, East Coast Greenway

# What is Collective Impact?

Too many organizations are working in isolation of one another.

Collective Impact brings together organizations, in a structured way, to achieve social change.

From the website: [www.collectiveimpactforum.org](http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org)

# Core Elements of Collective Impact

- Common Agenda
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities (Action)
- Shared Measurement
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Organization





# Our Common Agenda

Ensure the Appomattox River Trail is built and maintained in a way that enhances the environment to positively impact public safety, health outcomes, and community prosperity for all



# The Role of a Backbone Organization

- For each **collective impact** effort, a **backbone** support infrastructure is needed to foster the cross-sector communication, alignment, and collaboration required to achieve identified goals and objectives.

FOLAR is organized to be the backbone of the effort for the Tri-Cities Region to complete the Appomattox River Trail



# Small Group Discussion

- Participants divided into 4 groups and spent time exploring the following topics as they related to the Appomattox River Trail:
  - *Sustainability, Maintenance, Educational Programming*
  - *Public Safety*
  - *Health & Recreation*
  - *Land Conservation/Environment*
- The summaries of flipchart notes are categorized under the Collective Impact framework of:
  - *Shared Measurement*
  - *Mutually Reinforcing Activities*
  - *Continuous Communication*
  - *Strengthening the Backbone Organization*





# Collective Action: Common Agenda (Common Challenge)

Ensuring the trail is built and maintained in a way that enhances the environment to positively impact public safety, health outcomes, and community prosperity for all. Flip Chart Summary:

Mutually Reinforcing Activities	<u>Sustainability, Maintenance, Educational Programming</u> Ken Newman, facilitator	<u>Public Safety</u> Frank Dukes, facilitator	<u>Health and Recreation</u> Theresa Krueggeler, facilitator	<u>Land Conservation and the Environment</u> Mike Foreman, facilitator
	Encourage and increase tourism from Tri-Cities Region and beyond	Ensure the community can access the trail without a car by tying into local transit, the NPS trolley and increase direct access from neighborhoods	Develop a program for trail sponsorships such as rest stops, signage, benches and other amenities along trail	Use Land Conservation to Minimize Flooding and Manage Stormwater.
	Adopt practices and programs on the trail that could help with maintenance like “leave no trace”, trail stewards	Check for cell coverage gaps	Host programs, events and activities on the trail	Design trail to manage and mitigate environmental impacts and use BMPs for community education when possible
	Post contact info along trails for the public to report issues and ideas	Regular police/DGIF presence on trail including police bike patrol	Establish volunteer and other partnership programs	Develop programs to highlight the history & culture along the trail as history has a deep connection to the land – be sure to interpret and connect people to stories
	Signage on all facilities in the system (docks, boat ramps, trailheads, etc.) should designate the location for emergency services or maintenance needs.	Use surveillance cameras or phone-call box (in certain areas)	Create awareness campaign	
	Develop educational programing in partnership with other organizations for both local school students and the general public			

# Collective Action: Common Agenda (Common Challenge)

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Flip Chart Summary:

Shared Measurement	<u>Sustainability, Maintenance, Educational Programming</u> Ken Newman, facilitator	<u>Public Safety</u> Frank Dukes, facilitator	<u>Health and Recreation</u> Theresa Krueggeler, facilitator	<u>Land Conservation and the Environment</u> Mike Foreman, facilitator
	Measure trail visitation and tourism impacts on region	Develop standard elements of trail design and maintenance to ensure trail user safety (including, but not limited to signage, trail surface and width, addressing new mobility technology, etc)	Quantify the positive impacts including health <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Provide local data as well as examples from other communities</li><li>○ Goal - improved RWJ Institute health statistics</li></ul>	Look for an increase in tourism as more land is conserved and trail developed
	Develop maintenance standards to ensure the same conditions across the system	Conduct Periodic Safety Audit	Create and maintain design, operation and maintenance standards between jurisdictions	Create a management plan for the entire system (across all jurisdictions)
			Develop standards to ensure accessibility for different ability & different user types (including fishing & boating) as well accessibility to neighborhoods & transit	

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	<u>Sustainability, Maintenance, Educational Programming</u> Ken Newman, facilitator	<u>Public Safety</u> Frank Dukes, facilitator	<u>Health and Recreation</u> Theresa Krueggeler, facilitator	<u>Land Conservation and the Environment</u> Mike Foreman, facilitator
<b>Continuous Communication</b>		Create key points and messaging, tailored for various audiences, to reinforce trail benefits	Develop consistent communication of multiple community benefits	Maintain strong partnerships to multiple sectors including academic, local business, corporations and property owners along the trail corridor
		Provide tours of the trail for local police, EMS, and DGIF, etc. to become familiar with the system	Encourage new trail users for health and recreation but also promote trail as mode of transportation	Connect with community regarding multiple benefits of the trail including environmental health, mental health and nexus between crime and community health
		Continue outreach and education to diverse groups – age, race, gender, ability	Acknowledge the tension between environmental protection and recreation along water while also acknowledging the experience of trail use increases environmental awareness and public willingness to participate in protection	Be aware of gentrification and affordable housing issues
		Promote group use of the system (reach out to various organizations)		Communicate about potential changes in use like possibility for future water intake facilities in Chesterfield and Prince George
<b>Strengthening the Backbone Organization</b>	Work to ensure FOLAR's sustainability as an organization - think now about FOLAR's role after the trail is complete and assess need for additional key FOLAR positions (staff), including an educational coordinator		Maintenance – think about long term staffing needs for regular maintenance	Need for coordinated funding program
	Consider an endowment fund to help with long-term initiatives			

# Next Steps

- FOLAR planned a regional field trip in April, followed by additional meetings in June and August
- Given our current global pandemic crisis, FOLAR and partners are working on a new plan on how to continue our Collective Impact work
- Nationwide, we have seen an increase in trail and greenspace use during this crisis, so our work is timely, relevant, and important to rebuilding the future



# Keep In Touch

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