

Fall Line Trail

Segment 6A Feasibility Analysis

Purpose

The Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility (OETM) is refining the plan for the Hermitage Road segment of the Fall Line Trail from Bellevue Ave to Westwood Ave. To identify the most feasible configuration for traversing between Bryan Park and the Diamond District, this feasibility analysis evaluates and narrows down potential alignments.

Background: Where We Started

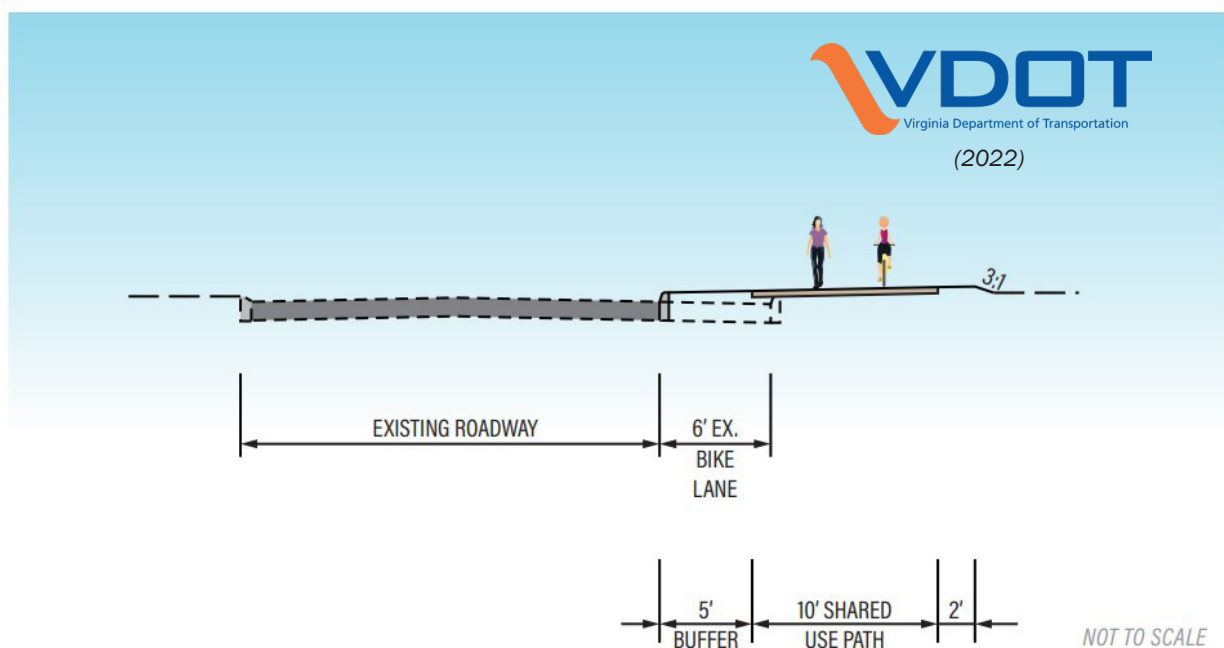
The Fall Line Trail, formerly known as the Ashland to Petersburg Trail, was originally studied by VDOT in 2019. For Segment 6A, VDOT's recommended alignment places a shared-use path (SUP) along the east side of Hermitage Road between Bellevue Avenue and Westwood Avenue. The typical section includes a 10-foot-wide path beginning at the curb, with a 2-foot buffer east of the SUP.

However, implementing the VDOT section as originally proposed would compromise the existing grass buffer and require removal of many mature trees. OETM initiated the following feasibility analysis to identify alternative configurations that better balance trail function, environmental preservation, constructability, and public input.



VDOT Proposed Alignment & Typical Section (2019). See <https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/richmond-district/fall-line-trail/>

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Finding Possible Routes

OETM evaluated potential alignments that could realistically be delivered within the project's budget and schedule. A preliminary feasibility review considered three broad alignment alternatives connecting Bellevue Avenue to Westwood Avenue, all assuming a 10-foot shared-use path.

The priorities for this route included:

- Minimizing impacts to existing trees and vegetation
- Maintaining a direct, continuous connection between Bryan Park and the Diamond District
- Staying within the project budget of \$14.25 million

In addition to the original Hermitage Road concept, two additional routes proposed by community members were included for comparison.

Alignment A: Hermitage Rd

This alignment follows Hermitage Road, consistent with VDOT's 2019 recommendation, from Bellevue Avenue south to Westwood Avenue.

Alignment B: Alley between Bellevue and Hill Monument Pkwy

Suggested by the public, this option would begin at Bellevue Avenue and turn right into a public right-of-way/alley approximately 300 feet west of the Bellevue/Hermitage intersection. It would continue south along the alley (with private property needed) to Hill Monument Parkway, then extend approximately 750 feet to Laburnum Avenue before rejoining Hermitage Road and continuing south to Westwood Avenue.

Alignment C: Powerline ROW East of I-95

Also suggested by the public, this alignment begins near Bellevue Avenue about 250 feet east of I-95, turning onto the VDOT- or Dominion-controlled powerline corridor. The route would continue south parallel to I-95, requiring either an overpass or underpass at the Laburnum Avenue on-ramp, and would require a new crossing across Laburnum Ave. It would continue south via Rosedale Avenue and Westwood Avenue back to Hermitage Road.



Alignment A: Hermitage Rd



Alignment B: Alley between Bellevue and Hill Monument Pkwy



Alignment C: Powerline ROW East of I-95

Feasibility Evaluation Criteria

Each alignment was evaluated against five key feasibility considerations:

Right-of-Way Availability: Determines whether the alignment can be built within publicly owned or controlled land, or if additional property acquisition would be required. This factor is critical because obtaining new right-of-way can significantly increase costs, delay schedules, and create legal or coordination challenges with private property owners or other agencies.

Ease of Construction: Assesses how practical the alignment is to design and build, considering factors such as topography, utilities, traffic control, and constructability. Simpler, lower-impact construction reduces project risk, minimizes disruption to the public, and helps ensure the trail can be delivered on time and within budget.

Connectivity and Directness: Evaluates how well the alignment links the key destinations of Bryan Park and the Diamond District and whether it provides a safe, continuous, and intuitive route for users. Strong connectivity enhances the Fall Line Trail transportation function and user experience while supporting broader network goals.

Cost and Property Impacts: Examines whether the alignment can be implemented within the available funding and what degree of impact it has on surrounding properties, infrastructure, and utilities. Minimizing property impacts and staying within budget are essential for securing funding approvals and maintaining community support.

Institutional and Agency Feasibility: Considers how easily the alignment can be advanced through coordination with relevant agencies, utilities, and property owners. Alignments that align with existing studies, agency preferences, or previously approved concepts are more likely to move forward efficiently and avoid permitting or jurisdictional barriers.

Conclusion

See the table on the following page for the feasibility analysis.

Among the three options evaluated, Alignment A (Hermitage Road) stands out as the only alignment that fully meets the project's objectives while remaining practical to deliver. It can be constructed entirely within existing public right-of-way, avoiding costly and time-consuming property acquisition. The corridor already supports multimodal infrastructure and has been validated by prior VDOT studies, which greatly streamlines coordination and approval.

In contrast, Alignments B and C present significant barriers—including private property dependencies, discontinuous connections, major grading requirements, and difficult utility or agency constraints—that make them infeasible within the project's scope and budget. By comparison, Alignment A provides a direct, cost-effective, and agency-supported route that preserves existing trees where possible, maintains continuity along Hermitage Road, and offers the most straightforward path to construction and implementation.

Next Steps

With Hermitage Road confirmed as the most feasible alignment, OETM will advance the analysis for Segment 6A by determining the optimal typical section for the corridor along Hermitage Rd—balancing trail width, buffers, tree preservation, and roadway configuration. This next phase will include community input to ensure the design reflects local priorities and context, supporting a safe and comfortable experience for all users.

- **Winter 2026** - presenting typical section options along Hermitage Road and discussion of scope for detailed analysis
- **Spring 2026** – detailed analysis of typical section options on Hermitage Road

Feasibility Analysis for Fall Line Trail Segment 6A

Alignment	Alignment A Hermitage Rd	Alignment B Alley between Bellevue and Hill Monument Pkwy	Alignment C Powerline ROW east of I-95
			
Right-of-Way	Can be constructed entirely within existing ROW	Dead ends into St. Alban's Church parking lot; would require acquisition of private property including church parking	Controlled by VDOT and encumbered by Dominion easements, no ROW available north of Laburnum Ave
Ease of Construction	Supported by traffic analysis (lane removal possible); corridor already has sidewalks & bike lanes	ROW too narrow; would need 10' SUP + 4' buffer + 12' vehicle lane for trash pickup would require ROW acquisition	Requires major grading to meet ADA; bridge or tunnel needed at Laburnum/I-95 on-ramp; new signalized crosswalk across Laburnum needed
Connectivity	Provides continuous corridor along Hermitage, most direct connection from Bryan Park to Diamond District	Currently non-continuous; difficult connections to Hill Monument Pkwy & Laburnum Ave	Potentially continuous but constrained by highway ramp and easement conflicts
Cost/Property Impacts	Fits within existing budget; little to no acquisition needed	Significant private property impacts, removal of St. Alban's Church parking creates much higher costs	Extensive site preparation; bridge or tunnel will require additional state/regional/City funding beyond the scope of the project; new signalized crosswalk across Laburnum needed
Institutional/ Agency Feasibility	Previously studied/ evaluated by VDOT, already approved	Requires private property/ ROW acquisition; challenges coordinating with property owners and extended timeline	Time and money required to change Dominion easement to allow for SUP; VDOT ROW is limited access for the interstate, may require additional elements to meet federal (FHWA) standards
Final Conclusion	Feasible	Not feasible	Not feasible