



Document #3:

## Updates on RVA757 Connects Initiatives

As of February 15, 2024

2024 is off to another exciting year for the I-64 Innovation Corridor. Here's an update of what we have been doing for the first 45 days of the New Year:

### Global Internet Hub:

Implementing the Global Internet Hub Strategic Plan is RVA757 Connects' Board's top priority initiative. We have now transitioned from planning to implementation. Here's what we've been up to:

- **Implementation Action Plan:** We have a detailed implementation action plan tracking report on each of the 10 Global Internet Hub Strategic Plan initiatives. We keep this document updated on an ongoing basis. You can access the latest version of Implementation Action Plan on the Documents Portal on the RVA757 Connects website [here](#).
- **Global Internet Hub Council:** The Global Internet Hub Council continues to meet on a monthly basis. Recall, this is the original investor group who provided matching funds for the GO Virginia grant that funded the creation of the plan. Two Council meetings have been held so far in 2024 to advance the drive the Plan's 10 strategies.

Council members are funding the Global Internet Hub-related work in 2024. Funders include Hampton Roads Community Foundation, Henrico, Virginia Beach, Dragonfli Group, Pixel Factory, Old Dominion University, CarMax, and Dominion Energy. \$119,000 has been contributed to date.

Currently, the Global Internet Hub Council is part of RVA757 Connects, working as a committee.

Part of the Council's 2024 work is to create a plan to shift the Council into a larger Richmond-Hampton Roads digital infrastructure trade group or association.

- **Consultant Hired:** The Global Internet Hub Council has hired Vinay Nagpal of InterGlobix as a consultant to help with implementing key parts of the Global Internet Hub Plan.



- **GO Virginia:** A meeting was held in January with officials from GO Virginia and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on potential future grant funding opportunities for some aspects of the Plan.
- **Network Ring and Other Digital Infrastructure Components:** On January 25, RVA757 Connects and the City of Richmond convened a meeting of the IT directors from the City of Richmond, and Henrico, Hanover, and Chesterfield counties. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the region’s digital infrastructure, including the potential need or not for a network ring. Participants agreed they should meet on a regular basis.
- **PCs for People:** [PCs for People](#) as detailed on their website, is a national nonprofit social enterprise working to get low-cost quality computers and internet into the homes of individuals, families, and nonprofits with low income. By recycling and then refurbishing computers, PCs for People provides a valuable service to businesses, families, and the planet by keeping computers out of landfills and repurposing them to advance digital inclusion.

We met PCs for People on the ChamberRVA’s 2023 intercity visit to Kansas City. We believe PCs for People could become the “soul” of the Global Internet Hub initiative. We can create a Global Internet Hub that becomes the place where we have ended the digital divide.

PCs for People executives are enthusiastic about adding the Richmond-Hampton Roads megaregion as a new market in 2024. We are setting up a meeting in March for PCs for People executives to visit Richmond, Williamsburg, and Hampton Roads to brief interested parties. An overview of this opportunity can be accessed on the Documents Portal [here](#).

- **Global Internet Hub website:** We have updated the Global Internet Hub website to reflect all of this work – [www.globalinternethub.com](http://www.globalinternethub.com), or [www.globalinternethub.org](http://www.globalinternethub.org), or [www.globalinternethub.net](http://www.globalinternethub.net) (we own all three URLs).

## Multi-use Trails:

- RVA757 Connects’ staff is following the EC-approved [RVA757 Connects’ Multi-use Trail Plan](#). RVA757 Connects supports all multi-use trails in the Richmond and Hampton Roads



regions. This includes the Fall Line Trail, Virginia Capital Trail, BoAT Trail, and Eastern Shore Trail.

- On February 6, RVA757 Connects presented ideas to the Tidewater Trails Alliance board on ways to accelerate extending Virginia Capital Trail all the way to Virginia Beach. Our recommendations included a strong suggestion and logic on changing the name of the Birthplace of America Trail (BoAT) to something that ties into the Virginia Capital Trail. Our presentation can be accessed on the Documents Portal [here](#).
- Future meetings are planned to assist the Tidewater Trails Alliance Board in making a stronger case for the multi-use trail, recruit senior government and business leader advocates, create a dynamic website (with a strong social media component), and conduct aggressive stakeholder outreach.

### **Passenger Rail:**

- The RVA757 Connects Rail Committee is making plans for 2024. This will include meetings with representatives of the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the regional planning district commissions.

### **Four Key Job-Generating Industries:**

- The 2022 [RVA757 Connects' Opportunity Study](#) identified the four key job-building industries shared by the Richmond region and Hampton Roads. These include:
  - Life Sciences
  - Data and Data Analytics
  - Cyber-security
  - Logistics and transportation

RVA757 Connects' 2024 priorities include building awareness of these four industry clusters where we can, including or own communication channels.

To this end, the first Virtual Innovation Spotlight webinar of 2024 featured ivWatch, a life sciences company based in Newport News.



Per [ivWatch.com](http://ivWatch.com) website, the company's mission is to prevent patient harm by monitoring and detecting IV infiltrations. The company brought to market the world's first sensors and monitor that are uniquely created to detect peripheral IV infiltrations at the earliest stages, offering clinicians the ability to intervene well before harm can be seen by the human eye to enhance patient safety and reduce liability.

The ivWatch June 3 Innovation Spotlight can be viewed here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6EXfVRrPJY>

## **Workforce Development:**

In the last Board/MIC meeting of 2023, the Board/MIC discussion on future potential priorities for RVA757 Connects centered on the underlining need to support the megaregion's workforce talent development across all of our initiatives.

To this end, RVA757 Connects' February 7 Virtual Innovation Spotlight webinar featured Dr. David Doré, the new Chancellor of Virginia's Community College System (VCCS). Chancellor Doré eloquently made the following points:

- VCCS is committed to transfer-bound students but is refocusing the system's efforts toward recruiting from and serving the needs of the 3.2 million Virginia adults who face limited job prospects because they lack post-high school credentials.
- VCCS needs to focus on the "new majority of learners" that includes adult learners, veterans or military-affiliated, working Virginians who may have some college experience but no higher education credential or degree, and working parents.
- In addition to increasing opportunities for on-demand, anytime learning, VCCS must embrace the pay-for-performance programs and called for expansion of successful VCCS programs like FastForward and G3, and for scaling-up online learning enrollments.
- The community college system also is aligning with the nine GO Virginia regions to generate the traction needed to scale its programs to meet the needs of businesses in high demand sectors including healthcare, IT and cybersecurity, and manufacturing. It also will enable the system to better leverage each college's assets for stronger collegiate and workforce partnerships.

- VCCS also will need to develop state-of-the-art career and technical programs and laboratories, including new investments in equipment, simulators, specialized spaces and building infrastructure.
- All of these actions will uplift generations to come. However, the ambitious goals and changes at Virginia's community colleges cannot be achieved without substantial additional resources from the state.
- The Virginia Community College System remains the least funded of all Virginia public institutions of higher education. The system receives less than 57 cents for every \$1 that goes to support a full-time equivalent student at a public Virginia university.

Dr. David Doré's full remarks on the webinar can be viewed here:

<https://rva757connects.com/2024-1/blog-post-title-one-79n7f-xy9c3>