



Advancing the Birthplace of America Trail



An RVA757 Connects' Priority

February 6, 2024





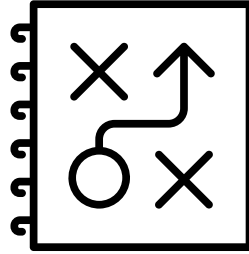
The Current Situation Facing the BoAT Trail

Tailwinds

- **Early Wins** – Concept is organized with modest funding starting to happen.
- **Planning Support** – HRPTO and HRPDC are fully engaged.
- **Municipal Support** - 17 local governments have unanimously supported the BoAT Trail in Hampton Roads
- **Stakeholders** – Tidewater Trails Alliance has created a platform to grow greater support.
- **Culture** – Biking is becoming more mainstream.
- **Recent Big Win** – Virginia Beach segment show momentum.

Headwinds

- **Complexity** - Complex environment creates challenges - alignments, property ownership, on-street/off-street, available right of way, etc.
- **Funding** - Not enough funding for design work, but resources to further address planning level issues, including refinement of route locations.
- **Competition** – Louder voices on other trails getting more attention and support.
- **Champion** - Lack of a Champion(s) – elected and business leader(s)
- **Staff Support** – No full-time manager.
- **Marketing** – Lack of clear strategy with marketing support.



Strategic Imperatives To Drive Success

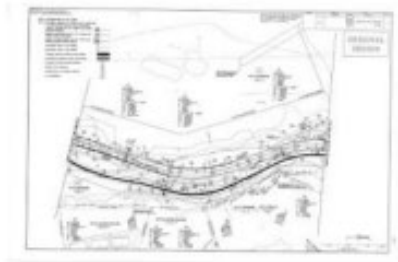
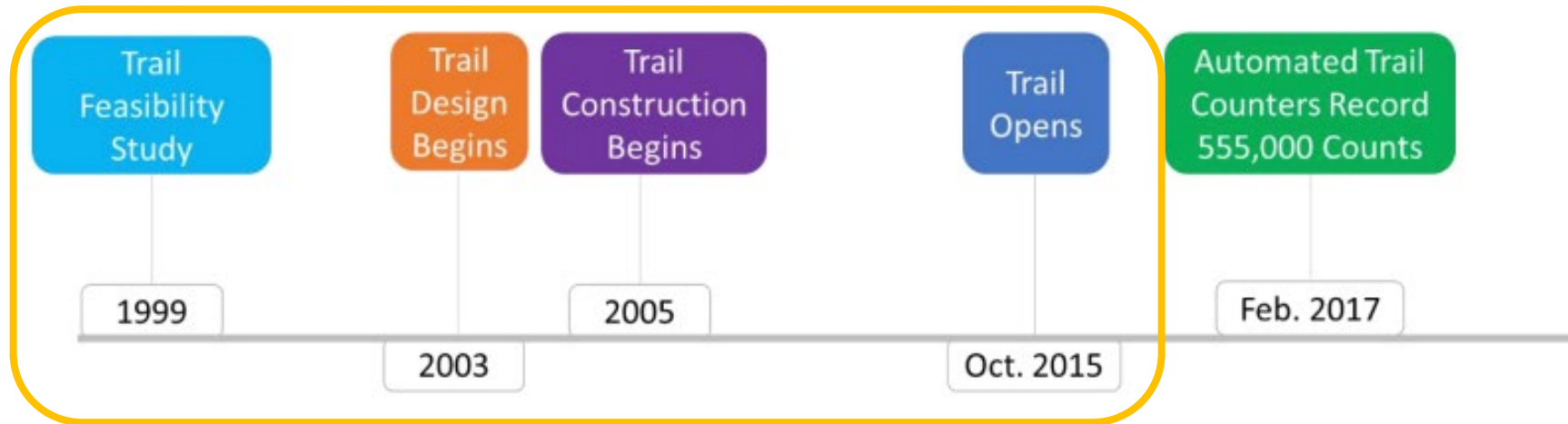
Overarching Goal:

Build and open the BoAT as soon as possible.

The Virginia Capital Trail Took 15 years to go from planning to opening.



FIGURE 5: FROM VISION TO REALITY, VIRGINIA CAPITAL TRAIL TIMELINE



Source: Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO), Birthplace of America Trail Study, 2017

Virginia Capital Trail's Strategy



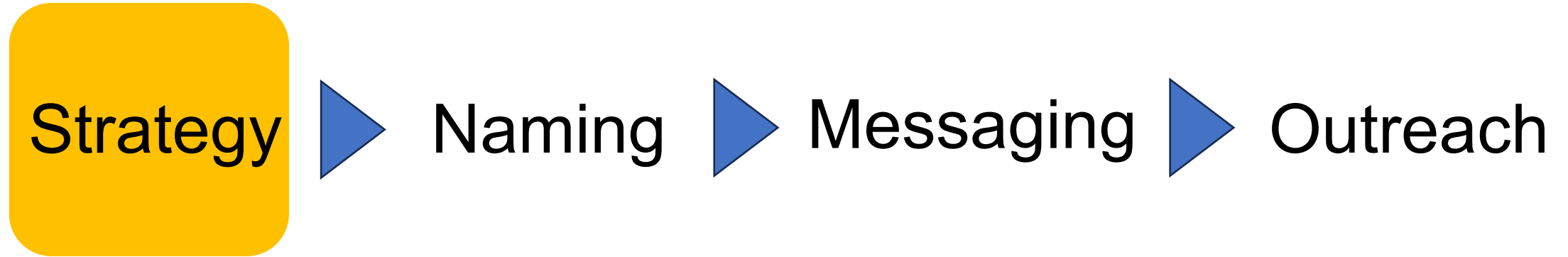
1. The concept of the trail had **initial champions – elected official and business leaders**.
2. The energy of the initial champions was sustained by creating **a foundation (501c3)**.
3. **Dedicated staff person hired** – someone who worked on advancing the concept every day. (4 FTE current staff)
4. **Seamless integration with local governments** and their planning/timing needs.
5. Most of the trail **property was already owned by VDOT** (rights-of-way already in place).
6. Built in sections with gaps, **starting at the ends so the middle would have to be built**.
7. **The 2015 World Cycling Race** in RVA was a big deadline boost.
8. VDOT was and continues to be actively engaged (**VDOT handles most of the trail maintenance**).
9. **Active ongoing marketing and engagement** – events, promotions, PR, trail cleanup days, trail ambassadors, advocacy, etc.



Strategic Imperatives to Advance the BoAT

Strategy ► Naming ► Messaging ► Outreach

Strategic Imperatives to Advance the BoAT



1. Positioning
2. Champions
3. Partners
4. Funding Strategy

**1.
Position BoAT as
As a Multi-use Trail
(Part of The Longest
Trail System In Virginia)**

THIS



NOT THIS



Let's call the BoAT a multi-use trail

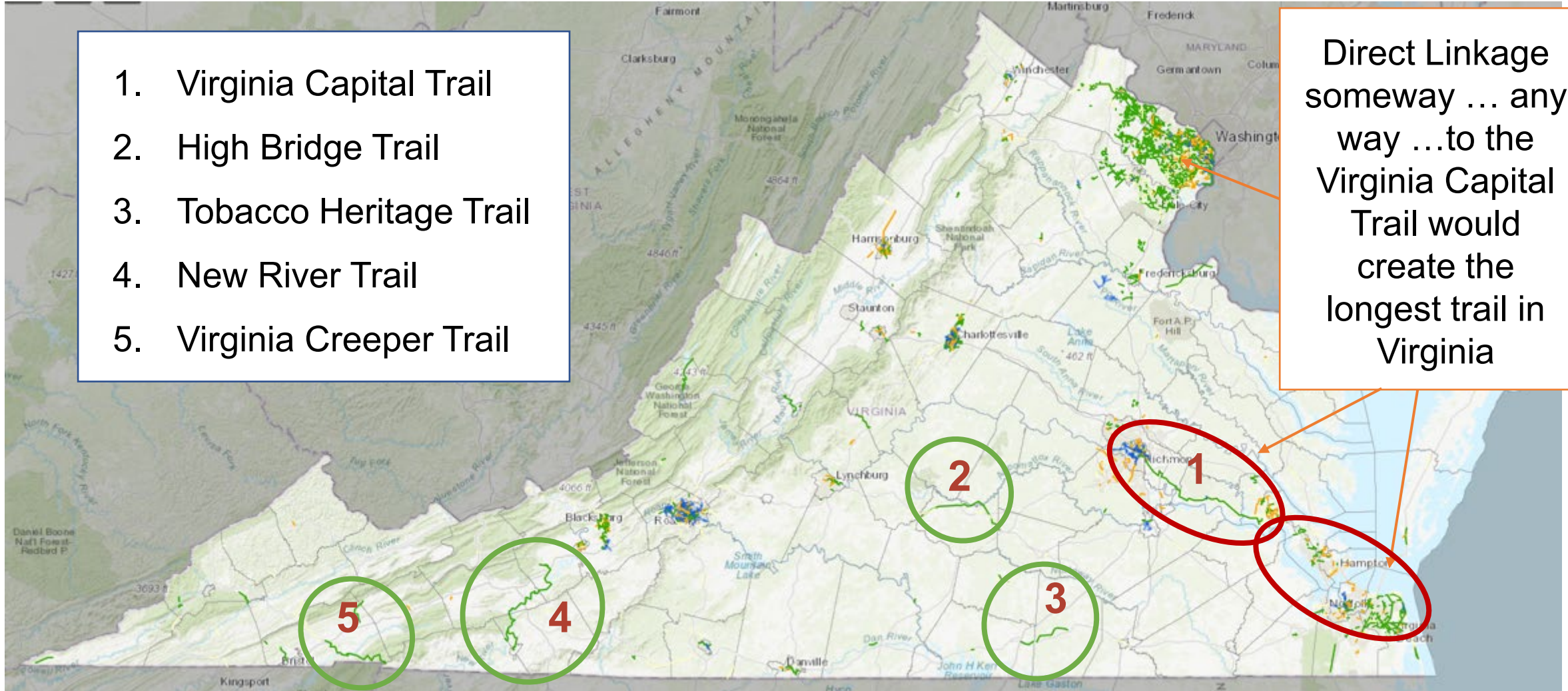
This is the term in the legislation and a proper technical term.

- No trail is built without some compromise, but we don't want that to lead the message.
- Parts of the BoAT trail will weave through urban areas to ensure routing through low income, socially distressed areas where equity and environmental justice will be key topics.
- In our more dense urban areas, due to property ownership, the built environment, and available right of way means we must be creative with context sensitive design.
- This might not always lend itself to “off road dedicated lanes” – although that is our priority goal.
- Our message must be simple – “*a dedicated trail that does not share space with cars.*” This can be “*side paths,*” which are adjacent to roads but otherwise still dedicated trails.
- (The Virginia Capital Trail in Varina is a good example).

There Are Only A Very Few Long-Distance Multi-use Trails in the Commonwealth . . . Let's Become the Longest Trail In Virginia

1. Virginia Capital Trail
2. High Bridge Trail
3. Tobacco Heritage Trail
4. New River Trail
5. Virginia Creeper Trail

Direct Linkage
someway ... any
way ...to the
Virginia Capital
Trail would
create the
longest trail in
Virginia



Source: Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); Trail Map

2.

**Let's Get Elected and
Business Champion(s)
Onboard Immediately**

We Need The Third Leg of Leadership



All 17 Jurisdictions
Are “All In”



Community Advocates
Are Engaged
(But Need to grow
Exponentially)



658 followers

Elected Officials
And Business Leaders



Trail Champions



Trail	Champions
Fall Line	Sports Backers and Clark Mercer
Eastern Shore	Former Governor Ralph Northam
Shenandoah Rail Trail	Todd Gilbert, Mark Obenshain, Emmett Hanger, and Tony Wilt
BoAT	?

3.

**Let's Align with
Strategic Partners**

Many Trail Advocacy Group Exist Across The State



www.virginiatrails.org



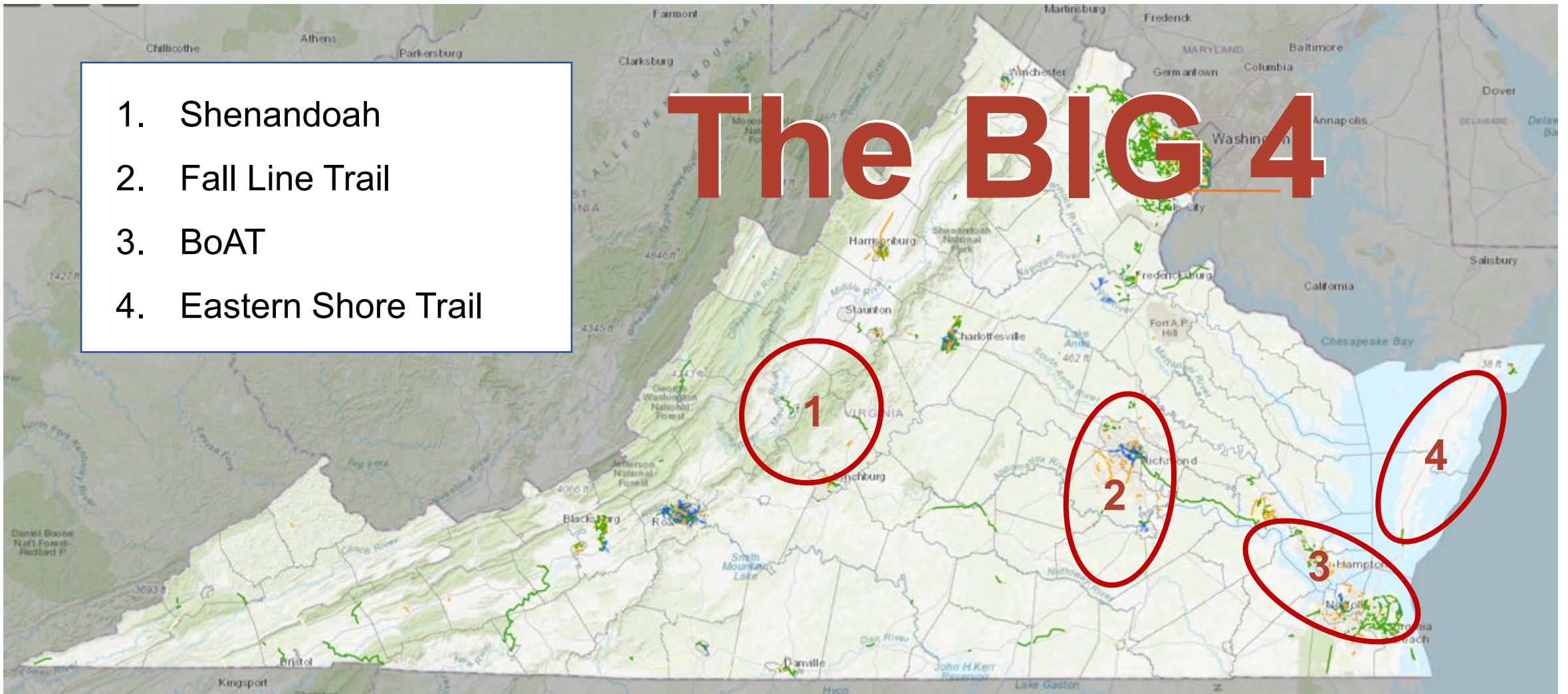
Devoted to making the valley a better place to live.



Northern Virginia Regional Commission

1. Shenandoah
2. Fall Line Trail
3. BoAT
4. Eastern Shore Trail

The BIG 4



Fall Line Trail (Ashland to Petersburg)



Where: The Fall Line trail courses through seven localities: Ashland, Hanover, Henrico, Richmond, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg.

The Fall Line Trail will tie into the East Coast Greenway – the 3,000-mile cycling and walking route from Maine to Florida.

Advocates: Jurisdictions along the Fall Line route - Ashland, Hanover, Henrico, Richmond, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, and Petersburg

Champion: Sports Backers and Clark Mercer



Shenandoah Rail Trail



- **Where:** The biking and walking trail would stretch across a nearly 50-mile inactive Norfolk Southern rail corridor from Broadway to Front Royal.
- **Advocates:** Shenandoah Rail Trail Partnership, a group of localities and organizations across Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties.
- **Champions:** Todd Gilbert, Mark Obenshain, Emmett Hanger, and Tony Wilt

The screenshot shows the website for the Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership. At the top, it says "Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership". Below that, there are two buttons: "Haga clic aquí para leer sobre Shenandoah Valley Rail Trail en español." and "Are you a neighboring landowner that has been contacted by a lawyer? Click for info =>". The main content area features a video player with a red play button and the text "Shenandoah Rail Trail" and "Watch on YouTube". To the right, there is a "Related News" section with three articles: "Neighboring Rail Trail Landowners and the 'Taking' Claim" (Aug 02, 2022), "Support Investment in a Shenandoah Rail Trail" (Jan 21, 2022), and "Local Officials Ask Valley Legislators to Safeguard Rail Trail Budget" (Jan 20, 2022).

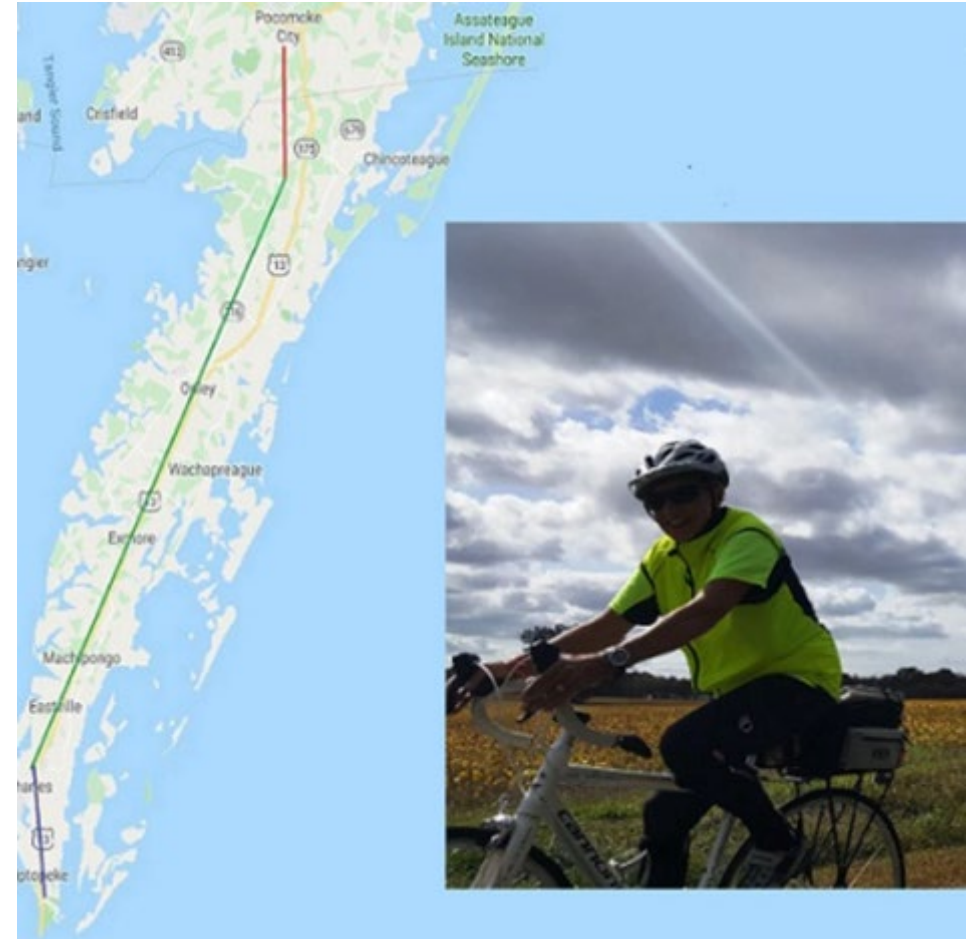


Source: Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, Shenandoah Rail Trail Exploratory Partnership, <https://shenandoahalliance.org/project/shenandoah-rail-trail-partnership/>

Virginia Eastern Shore Trail



- **Where:** 50 miles along the spine of the Eastern Shore of Virginia between Cape Charles and Hallwood.
- **Advocates:** Friends of the Eastern Shore Rail Trail – about 875 members
- **New Organization:** Eastern Shore Rail Trail Foundation, a nonprofit corporation charged with heading up planning an
- **Champion:** Former Governor Ralph Northam



4.

**Let's Map Out A Funding
Plan In Addition To
Grants**

Funding Strategy



Advance project segments to be candidates for grant applications



Package the entire trail as a major investment that takes multiple parties to fund.

Share the full story with potential investors

Thought Starter



- Help position the BoAT for funding state purposes as one of the Big Four:
 - Eastern Shore Trail – part of Hampton Roads community
 - Fall Line Trail – priority for RVA jurisdictional leaders
 - Shenandoah Trail
 - BoAT – priority for 757 leaders
- Tap into regional foundations and corporations for support. Perceived benefits of the trails differ between organizations (healthcare might focus on community health outcomes) so be sure to tailor communications and case for the trails).
- Offer “adopt-a-trail” opportunities for corporations that give them recognition on signage, websites, e-newsletters, etc.

IDEA

Inspire a 1-to-1 match campaign:

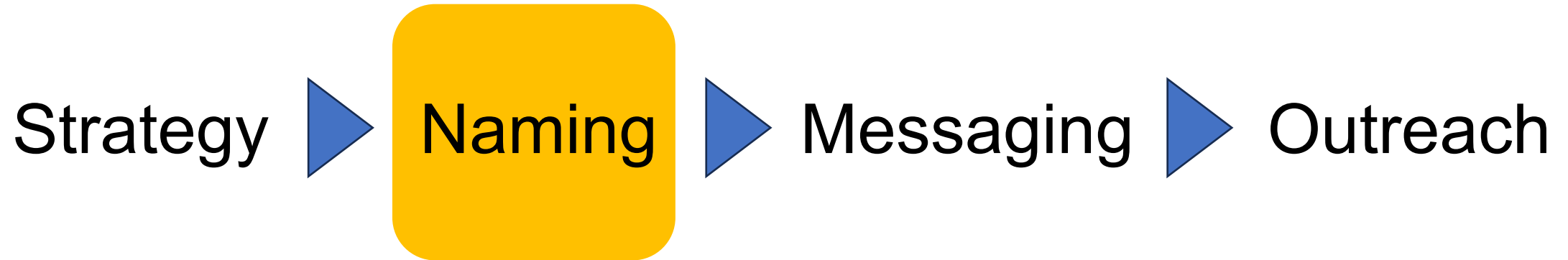
\$500M is the total cost for the project.

1/3 local governments

1/3 state and federal

1/3 business

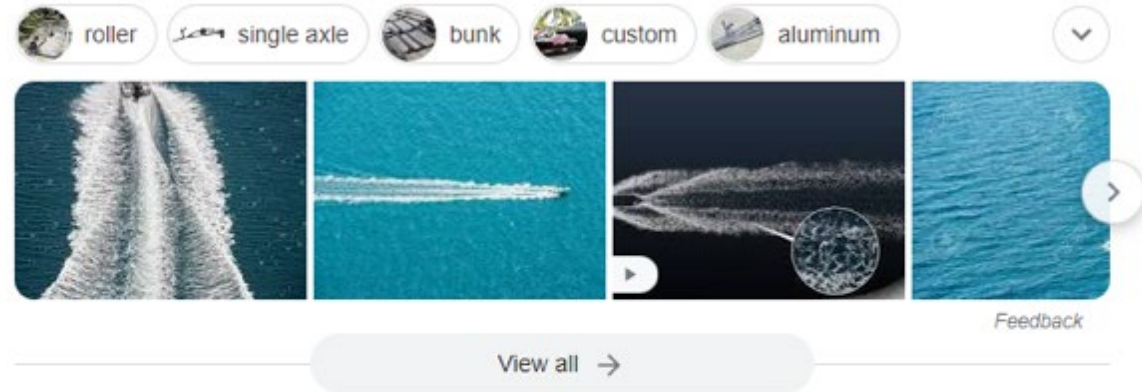
Strategic Imperatives to Advance the BoAT



Follow Best Practices:

1. Clear
2. Adds Value
3. Inclusive

Google “BoAT Trail” And you’ll just find Boat craft references



<https://www.southeasternmarine.net> › boats-trailers-for-... ⋮

All Inventory | Southeastern Marine | Richmond Virginia

Results 1 - 14 of 14 — Check out our entire inventory of **boats**, pontoons, trailers, and outboards for sale - Southeastern Marine is a marine dealership located ...

<https://www.southeasternmarine.net> › boat-trailers-for-s... ⋮

Boat Trailers For Sale | Richmond VA - Southeastern Marine

Results 1 - 14 of 14 — You won't find a better **boat trailer** anywhere else. Stop by Southeastern Marine today and see what we have in stock!

<https://www.facebook.com> › Marketplace › Richmond ⋮

Boat Trailers for sale in Richmond, Virginia - Facebook

New and used Boat Trailers for sale in Richmond, Virginia on Facebook Marketplace. Find great deals and sell ... 2000 Load Rite **boat trailer** in Richmond, VA.

Ask any person who isn't familiar with the BoAT trail name what would you imagine a trail called the BoAT would be like?.....

“It would have to do with boats.”

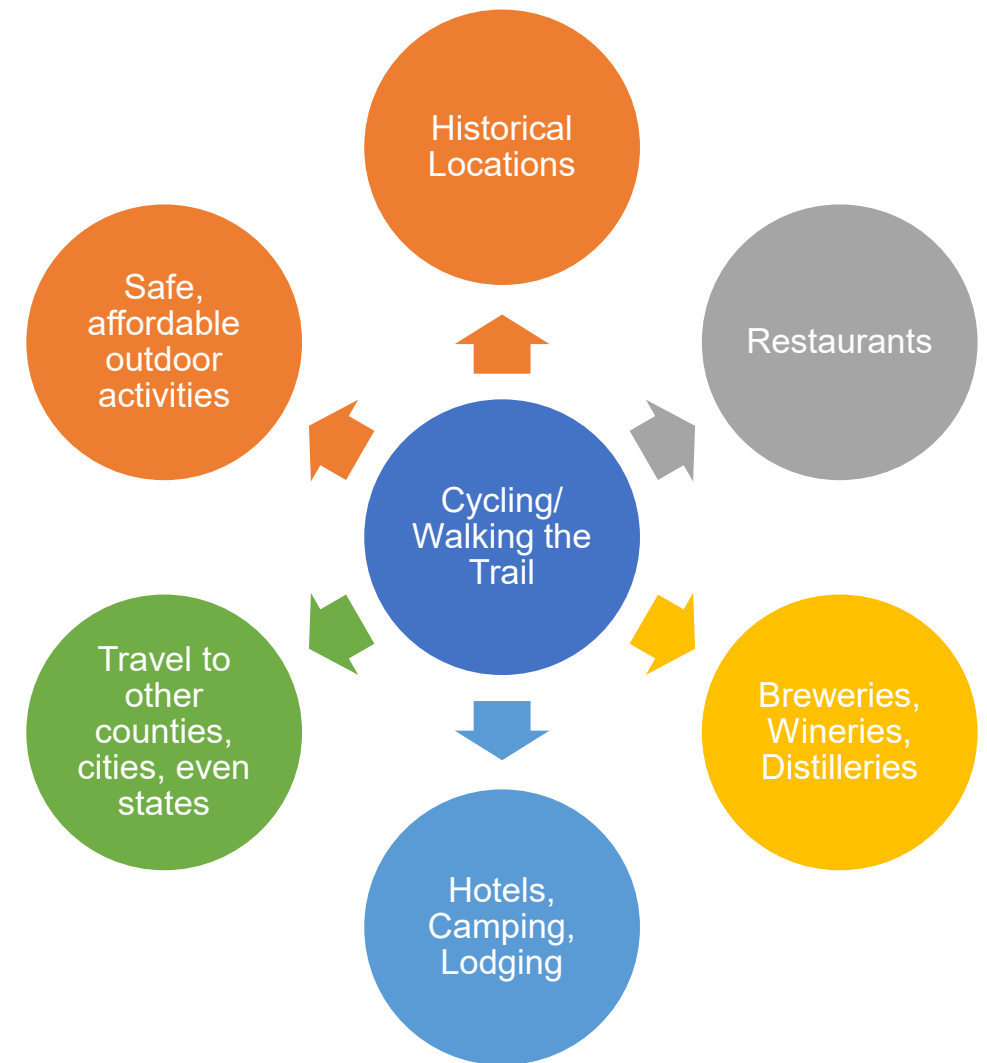
“You would ride on a boat.”

“You take your own boat on a designated journey.”

Successful Trails Leverage the Successful Tourism Marketing “Hub and Spoke” Approach

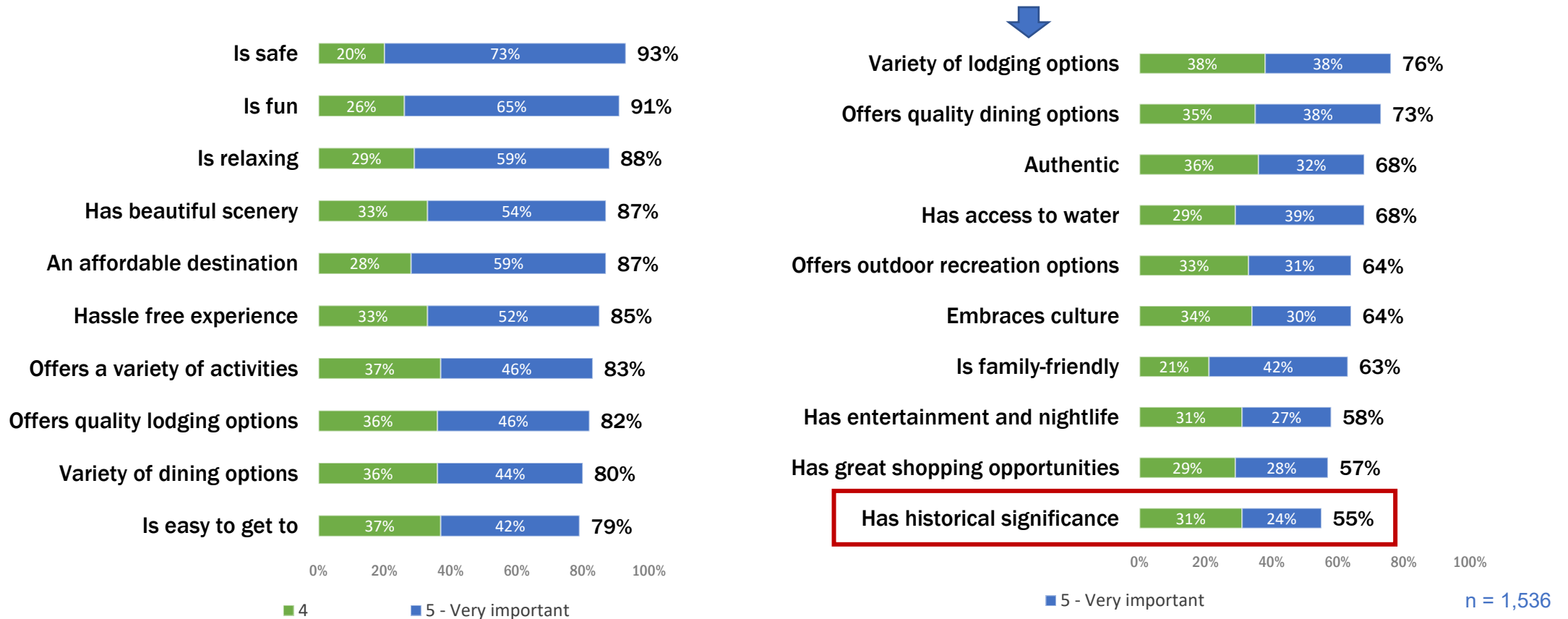


- **From cycling/walking the trail** you can explore historic sites, visit breweries and restaurants, rent a kayak, stay at a hotel and so much more. The world is your oyster using **cycling/walking the trail** as the hub.
- Let people build the type of experience they want. Promote all options. If they want a history trail experience, suggest places to experience.



A Direct Connection with History Is Not Likely To Be a Large Draw for Trail Users/Visitors

SIR research: The following is a list of attributes that can characterize or be used to describe a vacation or getaway in general. How important is each of the following attributes to you:



History is Complicated and Can Be A Source of Tension/Disagreement

While it's critical for more Americans to understand our nation's history, making "history and heritage" the cornerstone of a multi-use trail could make things difficult.

For example: Bacon's Castle

Bacon's Rebellion was formed in 1676 after then Colonial Governor William Berkeley **refused to aid Bacon in the killing and forceful removal of Native Americans from Virginia.** The rebels chased the Governor from Jamestown and ultimately torched the settlement.

"Our Design [is] ... to ruin and extricate all Indians in General." – Nathaniel Bacon

FIGURE 3: THE BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICA TRAIL – HISTORY AND HERITAGE



Next Steps



- Let's move away from BoAT.
- Let's explore other naming options.
- This includes a review of other trail names.
- Tie final name into our overall strategy. →
- In the end, make sure all parties - the jurisdictions, HRTPO, Tidewater Trails Alliance, new leaders, etc. are all in.

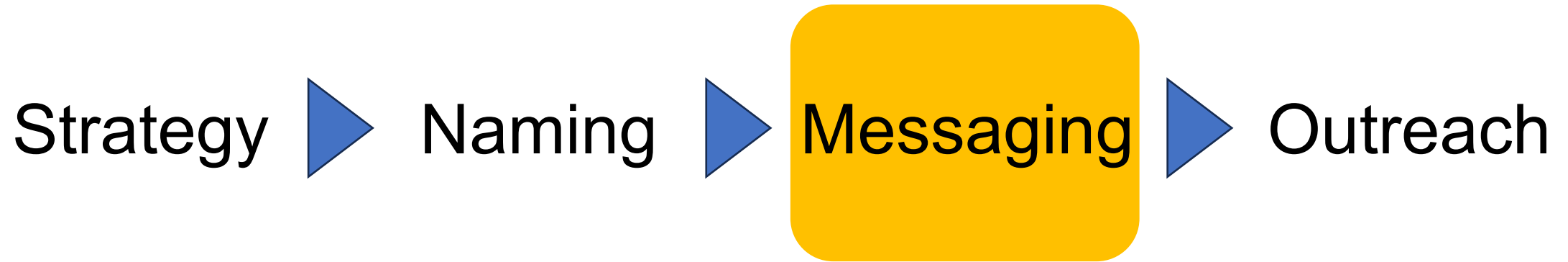
Strategic Approach:

Add value by leveraging a connection to the Virginia Capital Trail – Become Virginia's Longest Trail.

Virginia Peninsula Trail
Part of The Capital Trail System

Hampton Roads Trail
Capital Trail East

Strategic Imperatives to Advance the BoAT



1. Economic Development

2. Talent Retention and Attraction

3. Travel and Tourism

4. Serves Underserved Communities

5. Promotes Healthy Lifestyles

6. Creates Cultural Bridge

7. Connects Us to National Trail

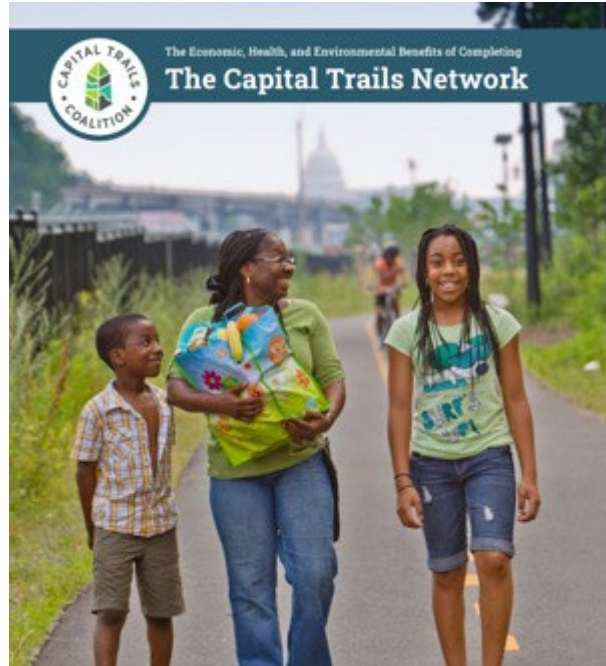
8. Legacy Benefit to America's 250th Anniversary Movement

**1. Investment in
Multi-use Trails Deliver a
Positive Economic ROI**

Capital Trails Network, VA, D.C., MD

The Economic Impact on the DC Metro Area of Capital Trail Network Completion

generated from a \$1.09B investment over 25 years



Potential State Tax Revenue

resulting from the completed Capital Trails Network over 25 years



An Interconnected Active Transportation System For the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area

Capital Trails Coalition seeks to create a trail network that is . . .

- ACCESSIBLE** to people of all ages and abilities
- HEALTHY & SAFE** to promote wellbeing
- EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED** to provide access across all communities
- RELIABLE** for affordable, sustainable transportation
- WORLD-CLASS** built to the highest design standards

Economic Impacts



Environmental Benefits



Source: Capital Trails Coalition, The Economic, Health and Environmental Benefits of Completing the Capital Trails Network, 2021

Silver Comet Trail, NW of Atlanta

Qualitative Benefits:

- Enhances employer and employee attraction
- Increases access and mobility for local communities
- Direct and indirect health care savings
- Direct and indirect worker compensation savings



“For every \$1 spent on the Silver Comet Trail expansion, Georgians gain an estimated \$4.64 in direct and indirect economic benefits.”

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

This Economic Impact Analysis is the first of its kind to comprehensively report the economic benefits of the existing 61-mile Silver Comet Trail and its proposed 66-mile expansion. Recreational amenities such as rail-trails are increasingly seen as regional economic development tools that generate value through:

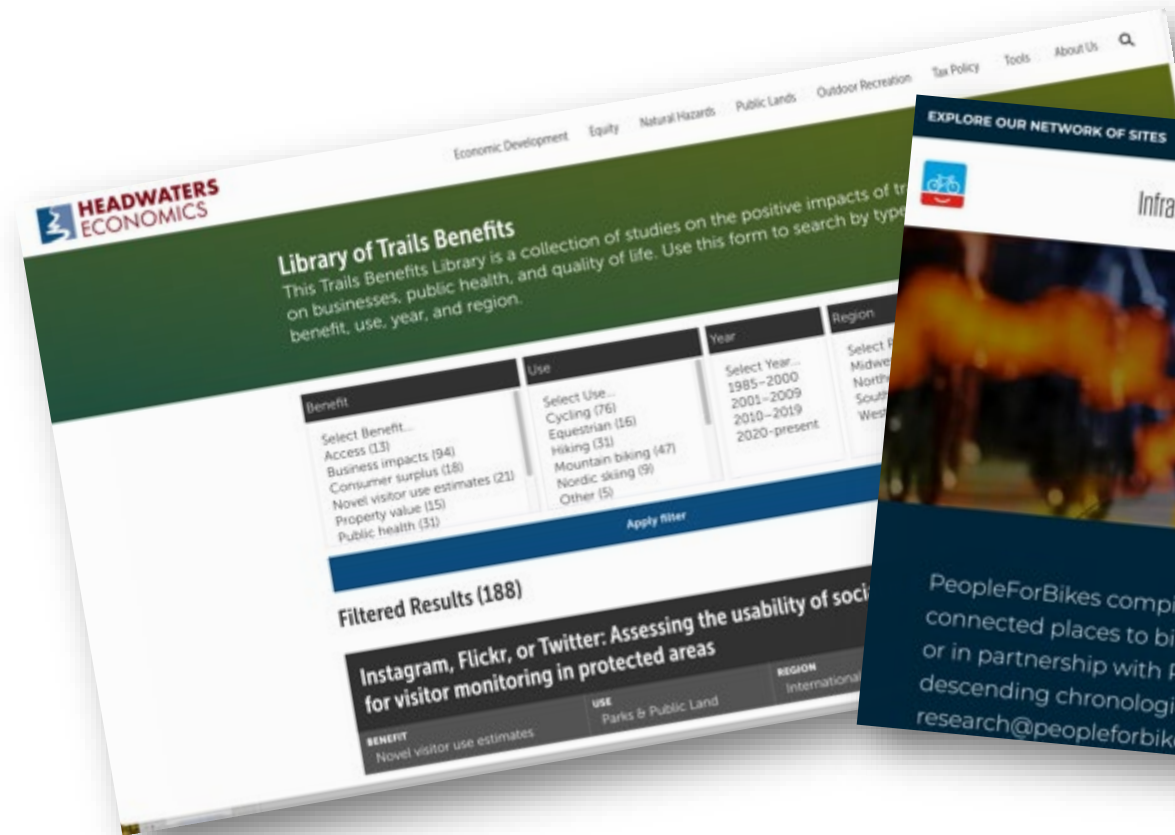
- **Recreational spending** (bicycle rentals, food & drink, sporting equipment)
- **Tourism** (spending by out-of-state users on lodging, transportation, dining)
- **Spillover impacts** (additional jobs and worker spending)
- **Fiscal impacts** (sales tax revenue generated)
- **Increased property values** (increased household wealth near SCT)
- **Property tax revenue** (benefitting municipalities and school districts)

Summary of Economic Impacts for Existing and Expanded Silver Comet Trail

	Current Trail Network	Expanded Trail Network
Recreational Spending	\$47 Million	\$71 Million
Tourism Spending	\$10 Million	\$15 Million
Regional Spillover	\$98 Million	\$147 Million
State Spillover Impact	\$118 Million	\$177 Million
Statewide Fiscal Impact	\$4 Million	\$5 Million
Property Value Increases	\$182 Million	\$316 Million
Property Tax Gains	\$2 Million	\$4 Million
TOTAL	\$461 Million	\$735 Million

**It's hard to do an ROI
study on a concept (the
current state of BoAT).
So let's re-package
other existing studies.**

Hundreds of ROI Studies Have Been Inventoried



Headwater Economics



People for Bikes

ROI Case Studies Galore

- University of Arkansas has done two economic impact studies related to trails, and the just-released edition measures \$159 million in annual economic development. \$100 million is health impact and \$59 is direct business activity.
- The Indianapolis Cultural Trail cost the city \$62.5 million to build and yielded a \$1.01 billion increase in property values adjacent to the trail.
- The Miami Valley of Ohio attracts about 90,000 visitors who spend \$13 million on goods and services related to their use of the trails every year.
- Bicycling generates \$137 million annually in economic benefits to Northwest Arkansas.
- The Wisconsin bicycle industry brings \$556 million and 3,420 jobs to the state.

2. Multi-use Trails Help Attract and Retain Young Professionals

**Our regions are
in a fierce
competition for
human capital.**



Net Migration by Region in Virginia

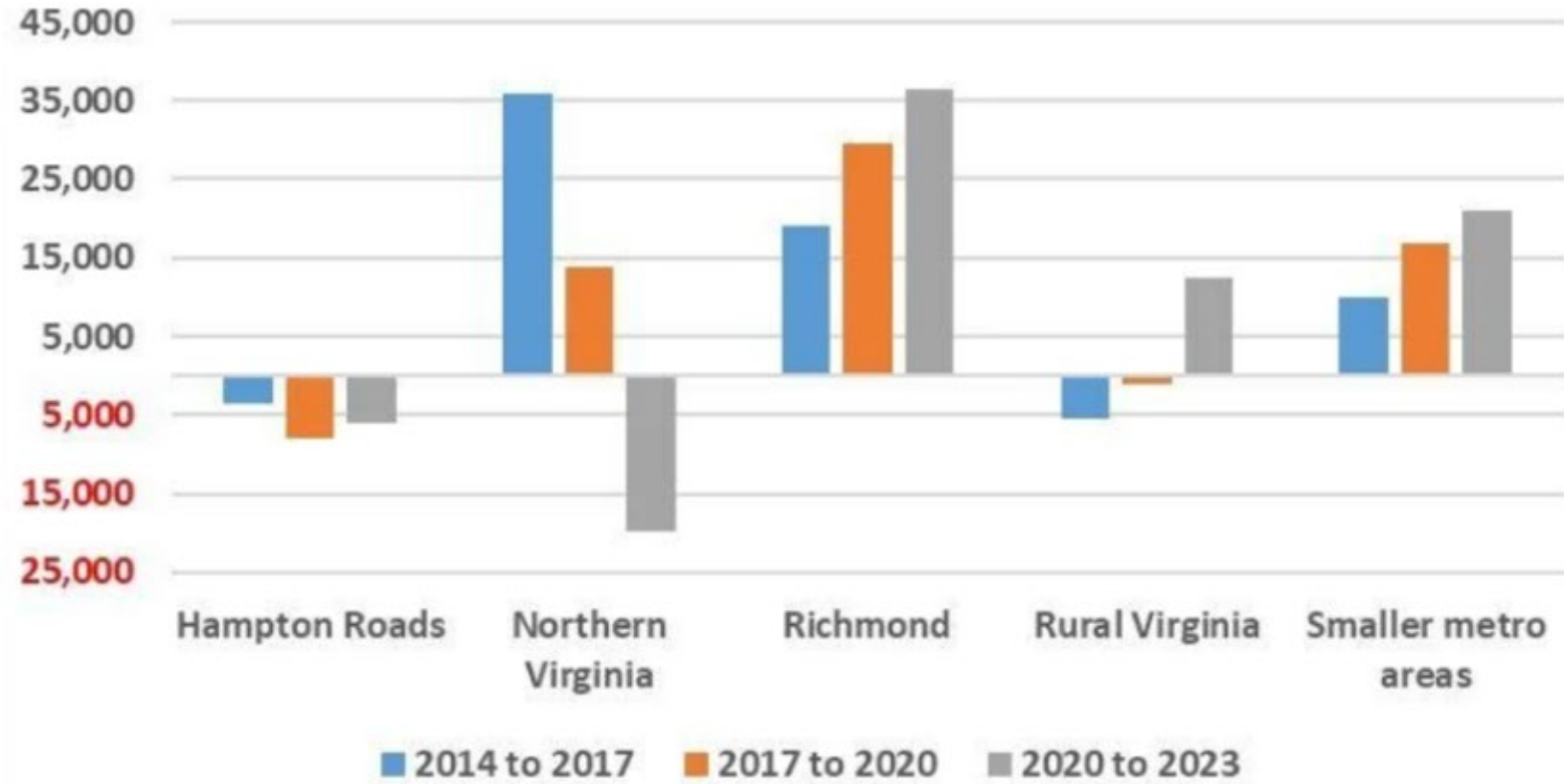


chart shows Virginia's migration trends for several regions.

Ieldon Cooper Center for Public Service



Young Professionals Value Bikeable-Walkable Communities

Source:
SIR's Placemaking Research

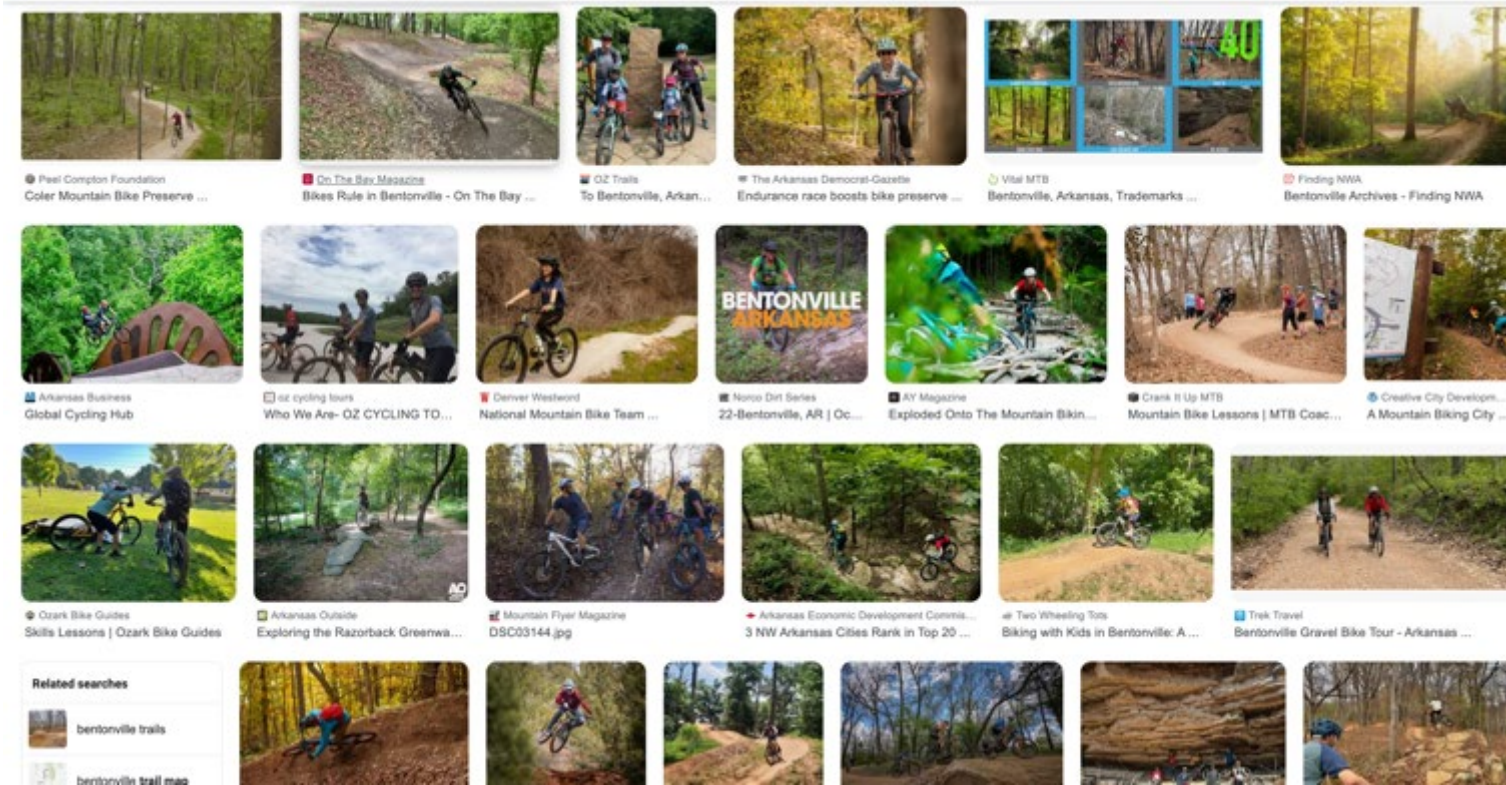
EXPECTATION ATTRIBUTE <i>Rate on 1-5 scale the following attributes in what you look for in the community you want to live in</i>	IMPORTANCE AVERAGE 1-5 Scale
Offers a great social scene	4.09
Is bikeable/walkable	4.06
Has rich variety of neighborhoods	4.03
Has good higher education options (colleges and universities)	3.94
Has an efficient public transportation system	3.88
Offers urban living environments	3.70
Offers an active music scene	3.61
Offers an active arts scene	3.59
Has a rich history	3.59
Is supportive of the military	3.36
Has an active maritime setting	3.17
Has an active sports scene/professional sports teams	2.88

Bentonville, Arkansas

The 13th fastest growing region in the country



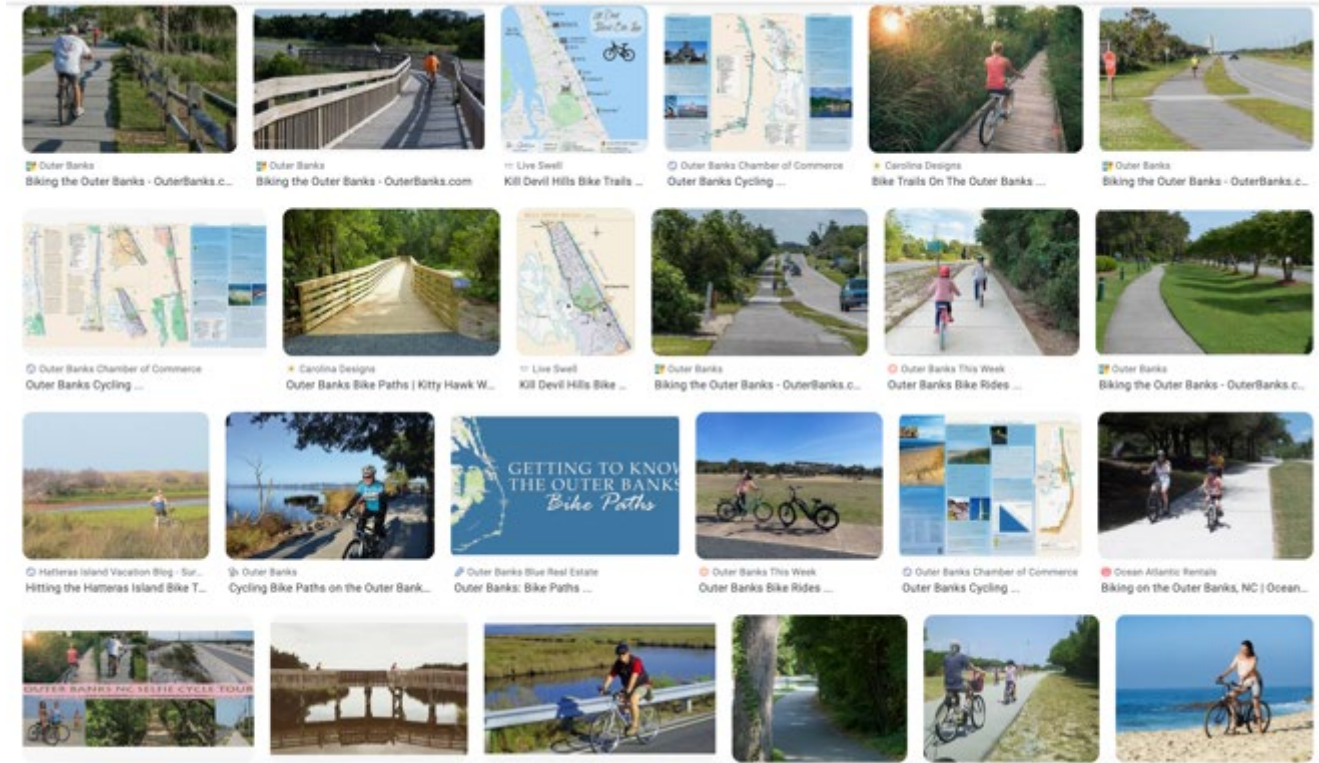
Trail development is the Number 1 driver of their talent attraction strategy. In 10 years, they have built 200 miles of multi-use trails and 400 miles of dirt trails.



3. Multi-use Trails Drive Travel and Tourism Industry

Outer Banks Regional Tourism

- 12% report staying three to four days longer to bicycle
- 43% report that bicycling is an important factor in their decision to come to the area
- 53% report that bicycling will strongly influence their decision to return to the area in the future.



4. Multi-use Trails Support Healthy Lifestyles

Multi-use Trails Promote Healthy Lifestyles



“There is a direct and significant measurable correlation between how close people live to biking and walking infrastructure and the amount of weekly exercise they get.”

American Journal of Public Health

“For every \$1 invested in building trails there is a direct correlation to \$3 of saved medical costs.”

American Heart Association

**5. Multi-use Trails
Advance Opportunity,
Serving Underserved
Communities**

Trail access can directly improve opportunities



- Transportation is typically the biggest drain on household budgets, making affordable mobility options critical for lower income families
 - Nearly half of all trips in the United States are within a 20-minute bike ride
 - More than 1 in 5 trips are within a 20-minute walk
- Urban multi-use trails often connect or ease access to transit facilities, enabling residents to safely access public transportation.
- Given their higher average incidences of chronic diseases associated with inactivity and less access to green outdoor spaces, lower-income neighborhoods and persons of color experience outsized benefits of trail access.
- Safe places to walk or ride are a critical and often lacking option in lower-income and minority neighborhoods.

Active transportation options (like those offered by a multi-use trail) present a practical choice for these commutes



Source: 5 ways multi-use trail systems transform communities, <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/5-ways-multi-use-trail-systems-transform-communities>

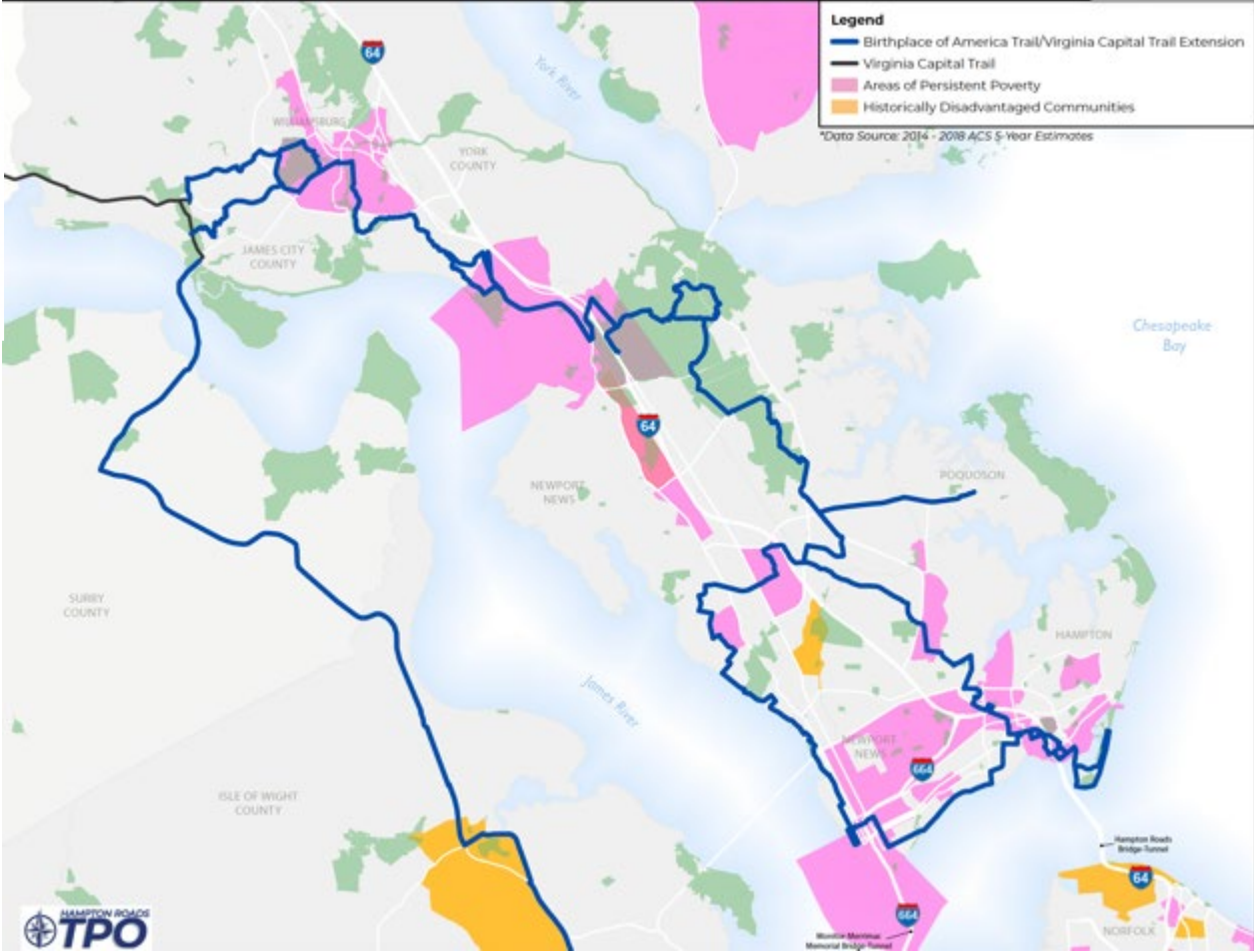
BoAT alignment against the Areas of Persistent Poverty/Historically Disadvantaged Communities



Legend

- Birthplace of America Trail/Virginia Capital Trail Extension
- Virginia Capital Trail
- Areas of Persistent Poverty
- Historically Disadvantaged Communities

We have many residents without vehicles – these trails will be a quality of life amenity for them and provide another means for access to work, school and opportunity.



6. Multi-use Trails Are Cultural Bridges

Biking and Walking Activities Have Universal Appeal

Activity preferences and participation by race

	ASIANS	AFRICAN AMERICANS	HISPANICS	WHITES
1	Running, Jogging and Trail Running 25%	Running, Jogging and Trail Running 17%	Running, Jogging and Trail Running 21%	Hiking 22%
2	Hiking 22%	Road Biking, Mountain Biking and BMX 12%	Road Biking, Mountain Biking and BMX 17%	Freshwater, Saltwater and Fly Fishing 19%
3	Road Biking, Mountain Biking and BMX 16%	Freshwater, Saltwater and Fly Fishing 11%	Hiking 17%	Car, Backyard, Backpacking, and RV camping 18%
4	Car, Backyard, Backpacking, and RV camping 12%	Car, Backyard, Backpacking and RV Camping 7%	Car, Backyard, Backpacking and RV Camping 16%	Road Biking, Mountain Biking and BMX 17%
5	Freshwater, Saltwater and Fly Fishing 10%	Hiking 6%	Freshwater, Saltwater and Fly Fishing 14%	Running, Jogging and Trail Running 16%

Source: Outdoor Foundation, 2021 Outdoor Participation Trends Report

Increased minority access to parks and trails improves more than just their health and safety



“A more diverse group of park users leads to a greater number of positive interracial interactions. These positive interactions are associated with favorable social outcomes, including **lower levels of prejudice, higher interracial trust, and stronger civic engagement to support social justice.**”



Source: Powell, Roslynn Arnesia. "Who Is Responsible for Normalizing Black Bodies in White Spaces?" Journal of Park and Recreation Administration 39, no. 1 (2021).

**7. Our Multi-use Trails Will
Connect Hampton Roads
to the National Trail
System**

Major U.S. Bike-Walk Trail Routes Are Being Planned



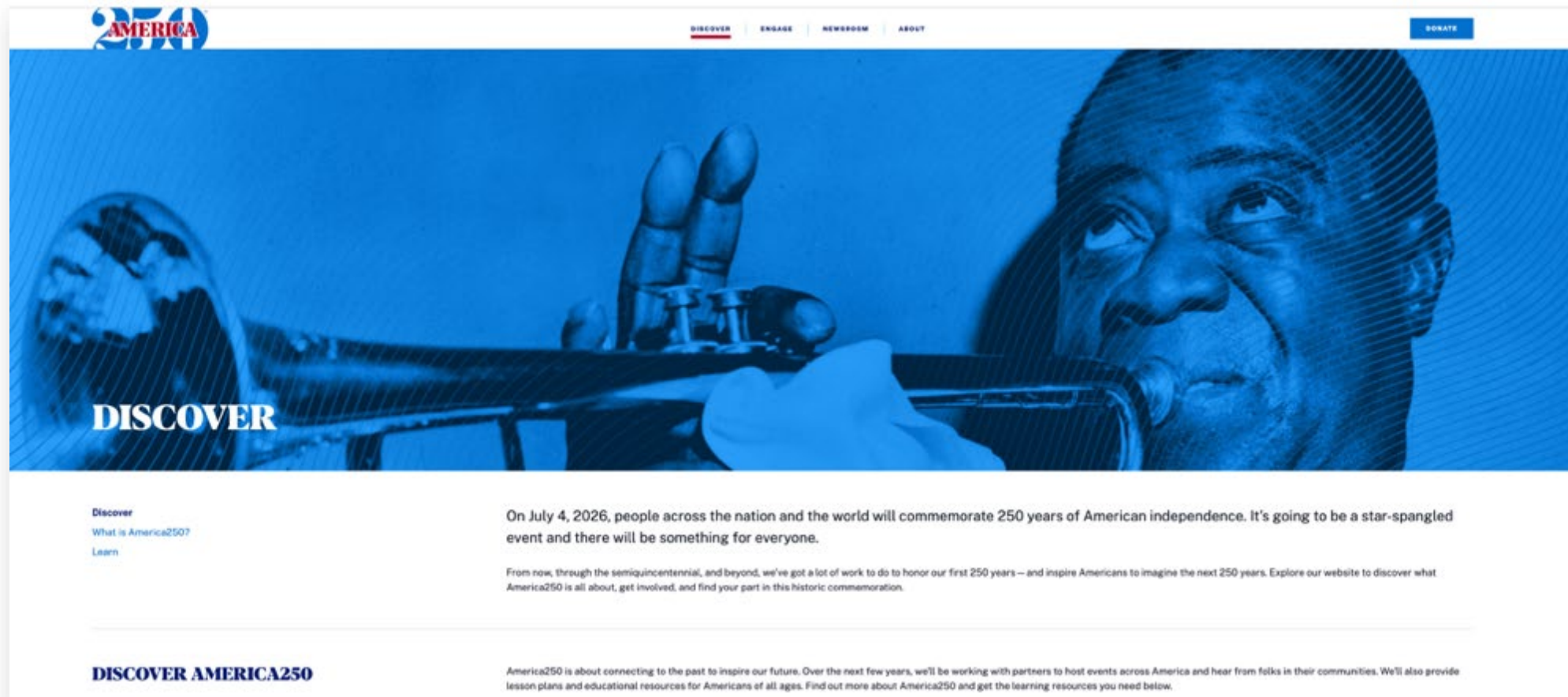
Transamerica Bicycle Trail
(5,000-mile cross-continent cycling route
that ends in Yorktown)



East Coast Greenway
(3,000-mile cycling and walking route
from Maine to Florida)

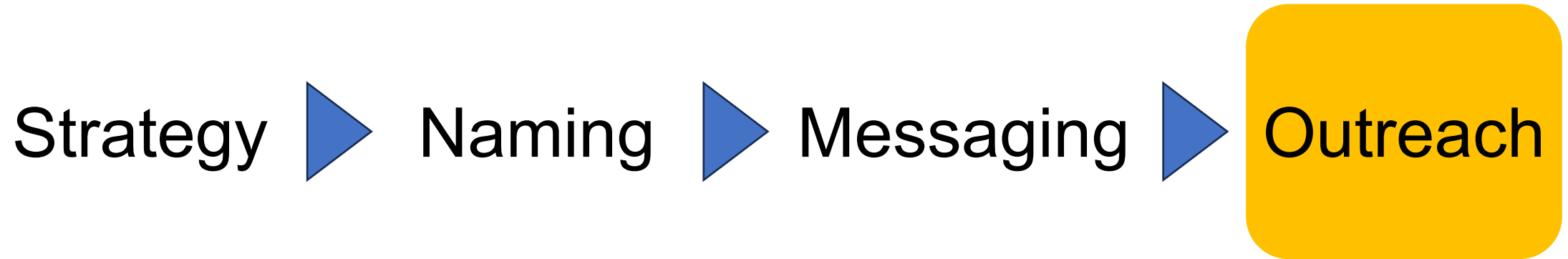
**8. Our Multi-use Trail
Could Be A Legacy
Benefit of America's
250th Anniversary**

Ties into the America's 250th Anniversary



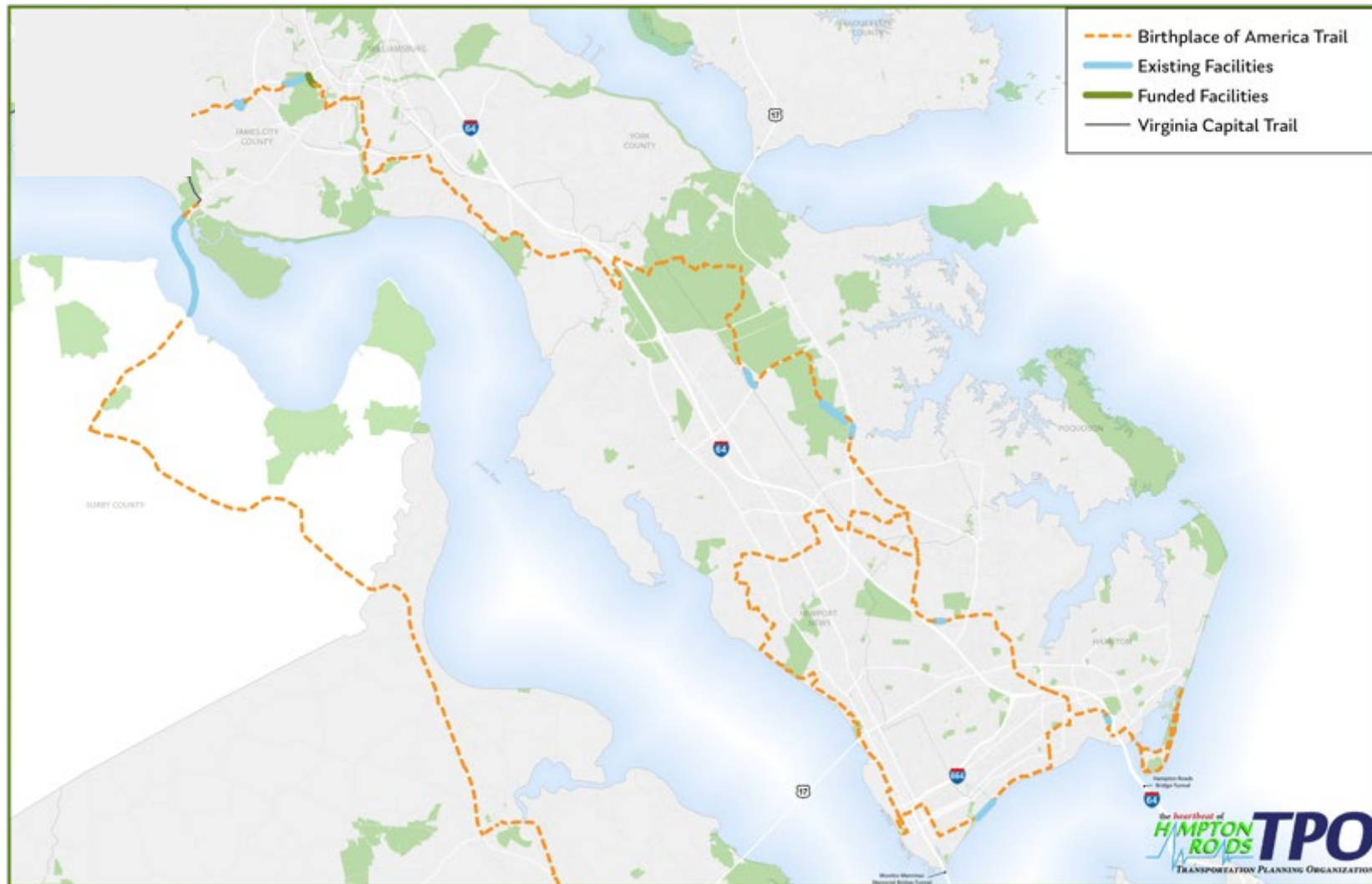
The screenshot shows the homepage of the America250 website. At the top left is the '250 AMERICA' logo. The navigation menu includes 'DISCOVER', 'ENGAGE', 'NEWSROOM', and 'ABOUT'. A 'DONATE' button is located in the top right corner. The main visual is a blue-tinted image of a man playing a trumpet. The word 'DISCOVER' is overlaid in white on the left side of the image. Below the image, there is a 'Discover' section with a link 'What is America250?' and a 'Learn' link. A main text block states: 'On July 4, 2026, people across the nation and the world will commemorate 250 years of American independence. It's going to be a star-spangled event and there will be something for everyone.' Below this is a paragraph: 'From now, through the semiquincentennial, and beyond, we've got a lot of work to do to honor our first 250 years – and inspire Americans to imagine the next 250 years. Explore our website to discover what America250 is all about, get involved, and find your part in this historic commemoration.' At the bottom, there is a 'DISCOVER AMERICA250' section with a paragraph: 'America250 is about connecting to the past to inspire our future. Over the next few years, we'll be working with partners to host events across America and hear from folks in their communities. We'll also provide lesson plans and educational resources for Americans of all ages. Find out more about America250 and get the learning resources you need below.'

Strategic Imperatives to Advance the BoAT



- *Corporate outreach*
 - *Outreach to the next Administration* ←
1. Map
 2. Modern Website
 3. Overview Video
 4. Concept Visioning Paper
 5. Outreach / Funding Campaign
 6. More Earned Media

Build On This Map – Make It More Consumer-friendly

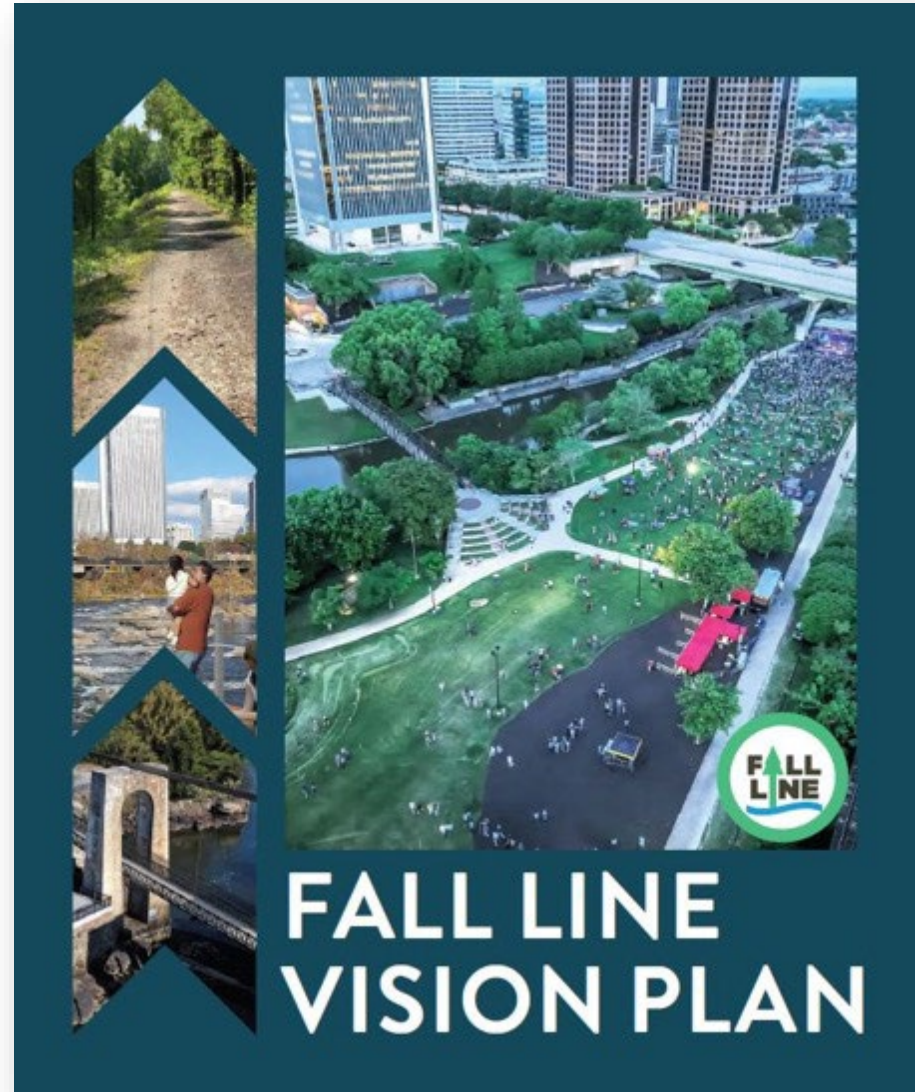


VIRGINIA'S I-64 INNOVATION CORRIDOR: RICHMOND REGION AND HAMPTON ROADS

The World's Next Global Internet Hub



Concept Visioning Paper



Consumer-oriented Website with Video

Eastern Shore of Virginia

RAIL TRAIL



Photo by Lauren Schulte

Stay on Track
with the
*Eastern Shore Rail Trail
Newsletter!*

Sign Up



[Home](#) [About](#) [Trail Maps](#) [Why the Fall Line](#) [News](#) [Get Involved](#)

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES

First Name*

Last Name*

Email*

Street Address*

City/County*

State*

Zipcode*

Phone

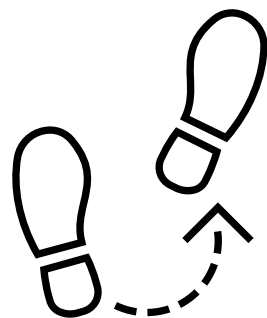
I accept terms & conditions

Stay connected and in the know on the trail's progress. Sign up to receive information updates and news about important events.

Submit

Build on This Momentum with Earned Media





Immediate Next Steps

Strategic Imperatives to Drive Success

Strategy



- Positioning
- Champions
- Partners
- Funding Strategy

Naming



- Clear
- Adds Value
- Inclusive



Arrive at Optimal
Winning Name

Messaging



- Economic Development
- Talent Retention & Attraction
- Travel & Tourism
- Serves Underserved Communities
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Cultural Bridge
- Connects to National Trail Movement
- Legacy Benefit to America 2026 Anniversary

Outreach

- Map
- Modern Website
- Overview video
- Concept Visioning Paper
- Outreach / Funding Campaign
- More Earned Media

2024 Next Steps



Jan. Feb. March April May June July Aug. Sept.

Arrive at Right Strategy,
Name, And Messaging



Create Case for
Support Paper



Finish Trail Plan – Map Out
Sections and (Rough) Related Costs



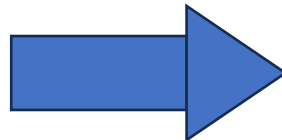
Recruit Government
Business Advocates



Prepare Exciting Materials
Website, Video, Social



Conduct Aggressive
Stakeholder Outreach



Brief Next Admin.



Onward!

