TROLLEY LINE TRAIL

Public History Project
INTRODUCTION

PlanRVA with assistance from NPS - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program is working to help the counties of Hanover and Henrico and the Town of Ashland, as they develop plans for the potential Trolley Line Trail.

The Trolley Line Trail is 14.8 miles long and runs depot-to-depot, following the original path of the electric car line from the early 1900s, starting in downtown Richmond and ending in the heart of Ashland. It will run along much of the same path as the northern section of the potential Fall Line Trail.

A history subcommittee began exploring opportunities for adding a public history component to the trail, that will expand partnerships with history, heritage, and underserved community stakeholders.

A site visit was conducted in September of 2021 with current partners of the Trolley Line Trail Committee and History Subcommittee and a phased plan was created.
BIG IDEA

Tell stories of local people who used the Trolley Line. Their stories can help tell the broader historical narratives of the early 1900s.

Engage community partners to help tell the stories and care for the trail and additional trail features.
PHASE A: AUDIO STORIES

Research and create short audio stories to listen to while out on the trail or from your own home.

Stories should be about people's experiences in the area at the time of the Electric Car Line.

*Goal is to have at least one story per original Electric Car stops.*
Phase A Examples

Greenwood Stop: Story of Virginia Shelton, who lived in Ashland and commuted by the Trolley Line to Virginia Randolph.

Chickahominy Stop: Story about the 'Jolly Trolley' and an interview from Historian Alonzo Thomas Dill, who describes the fun and games on the electric car, and shares a story of a distinguished attorney, who would remove his hat at the crossing of the Chickahominy River and declare they were in Hanover County.
Research, audio stories, and written text can be added to the existing Trolley Line Trail History & Tour StoryMap.

QR codes in Phase C can link to the StoryMap, allowing trail users to listen to the story, see pictures, and read any further information.

An online space allows room for many different stories, that can expand past our 'Trolley Line' time period.

Potential to engage college students, museums, historical societies, libraries, and more!
Phase B Example

Work has already started on updating the current StoryMap by PlanRVA!
PHASE C: TROLLEY LINE MARKERS

Design and mark all official original stops with small markers.

These will identify the trail, have a QR code linking to the audio stories and StoryMap.

Ideally they are visible on a sign post but could also be displayed in other ways.

Potential to engage original working groups, new community groups, partners of the potential pocket parks and more!
Phase C Examples

Markers can be designed in whatever fashion: by counties, by community contest, students, project partners, etc.
PHASE D: POCKET PARKS & INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

Design and implement coordinating pocket parks at the original Trolley Line stops.

Potential and interested organizations who align with the audio stories, can help create and care for the pocket parks along the trail.

Pocket parks can have other relevant features: interpretive signs based on Phase A, pollinator gardens, information about the supporting organizations, bike racks, etc.

See next slide for a list of some potential Trail storytellers, lovers, caretakers, and advocates!
Potential Project Partners

Museums
- The Cultural Arts Center
- Ashland Museum
- Virginia Randolph Museum
- Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden
- Institute for Contemporary Art
- Black History Museum and Cultural Center
- Science Museum of Virginia
- Children's Museum of Richmond
- The Valentine
- Beth Ahabah Museum & Arc
- Virginia Museum of History and Culture
- Hanover Historical Society
- Henrico County Historical Society

Boy Scouts & YMCA
- Guiding Line
- Patrick Henry Family YMCA
- Boy Scout Troop 700
- Boy Scouts of America
- Northside Family YMCA

Churches
- First Baptist Church of Elmont
- Gwarthyme Baptist Church
- Kenwood United Methodist Church
- Hanover Baptist Church

Colleges
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Virginia Union University
- Randolph-Macon College
- Fortis College
- Reynolds Community College

Businesses
- Ashland Meat Company @ Cermak
- Homemades By Suzanne
- The Henry Clay Inn
- Carytown Bicycle Company
- Clock Maker at Gwarthyme
- James River Cellars Winery
- Woodside Farms of VA, LLC
- Lavender Fields Herb Farm
- Pello Bikes
- Coqui Cyclery
- RVA on Wheels

Libraries
- Ginter Park Branch - Richmond Public Library
- North Park - Henrico County Library
- Ashland Branch Library

Animals & Wildlife
- Richmond Animal Care & Control
- Richmond SPCA
- Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

Schools
- Laburnum Elementary School
- Moody Middle School
- Elmont Elementary School
- Crisco Hey Richmond High School
- Chamberlayne Elementary School
- Greenwood Elementary School
- THE NEW COMMUNITY SCHOOL
- John M. Gandy Elementary School
- The Academy at Virginia Ran
dow
- Henrico High School
- Brookland Middle School
- Henry Clay Elementary School
- Longdale Elementary School
- Hermitage High School
- Richmond Community High School
- Ginter Park Elementary School
- Maude Trevett Elementary School

City & Town Organizations
- Hunton Community Center
- County of Henrico
- Town of Ashland
- Downtown Ashland Association
- Pine Camp Ashland and Community
- Three Lakes Park & Nature Center
- Longdale Recreation Center
Phase D Examples

Greenwood Stop:

Pocket park near Longdale Soccer Complex. Interpretive story continues about Virginia Shelton.

The interpretive sign could be written by Virginia Randolph Museum & Henrico County.

The park could have features from the Academy at Virginia Randolph, perhaps a Mini-Library in the shape of Virginia Shelton’s Sears House!

Virginia Shelton in front of her home in Ashland. Photo from Richmond Magazine. Read an interview with her [here](#).
**NEXT STEPS**

Working on an action strategy with the history committee: Town of Ashland, Hanover County, Henrico County, Ashland Museum, PlanRVA, and NPS-RTCA

Continuing research

Exploring Funding Opportunities

*If you are interested in more information or would like to be a part of the project, contact us at priggan@planrva.org or bjacocks@planrva.org*