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New Pedestrian Bridge Design Promises Brighter, More Accessible Route for Elizabeth River Trail Users

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation is seeking public input on a newly proposed design for the Lambert's Point Pedestrian Bridge; part of a trail reroute that would remove the need to navigate a busy roadway. [Concept renderings](#) of the design by Work Program Architects (WPA) are now being shared with community organizations.

The key element of the proposed trail upgrade is a pedestrian bridge that would cross the Norfolk Southern rail lines at Jeff Robertson Park, formerly Bluebird Park. The current trail route includes a section along Hampton Blvd that passes beneath a railway overpass. The walkway there is dark, narrow, and close to the road, making it noisy and uninviting, especially for families with children.

The 10.5-mile multi-modal Elizabeth River Trail connects 28 unique Norfolk neighborhoods and is used by nearly 750,000 pedestrians and cyclists annually. The new bridge would create a stronger connection between the Lambert's Point and West Ghent neighborhoods.

"The Lambert's Point Pedestrian Bridge helps mend a weak point on the Elizabeth River Trail that limited access for the whole community. A bridge at this critical location strengthens usability of the entire trail," says Kindra Greene, executive director of the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation. "Providing safe access to trails and green spaces is at the core of our Foundation as this connection would be transformative to the health of our community, people and the businesses the trail serves."

The proposed design shortens the ERT section that loops around nearby industrial buildings and uses a prefabricated truss bridge that can be installed without disrupting train traffic. Monopile concrete columns on each side would support the structure. A gently sloped approach with sections made from retired flatbed rail cars would provide ADA access for wheelchairs and a comfortable slope for people walking and biking.

Additional proposed features of the Lambert's Point Pedestrian Bridge include:

- Staircases on either side of the truss bridge for quick navigation
- Lighting beneath the bridge
- Railings high enough to safely accommodate cyclists
- Steel fiddle leaf fern patterns under the bridge to mimic the ERT Glowline

- Opportunities for public art and didactic signage on railway, city, and neighborhood history

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation submitted the pedestrian bridge design to Norfolk Southern for preliminary engineering feedback. The entire Elizabeth River Trail is a designated rail trail, with the initial right of way dedicated to the city by Norfolk Southern Corporation.

“This project is about creating a safer, more welcoming connection for everyone who uses the Elizabeth River Trail,” says WPA CEO and co-founder Mel Price, who also serves as vice chair of the foundation. “We wanted to design something that is functional, beautiful and deeply connected to the history and character of Norfolk.”

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation will now begin seeking feedback and funding for the pedestrian bridge due diligence. WPA helped launch the foundation and provides master planning services pro bono along with engineering firms advising on the pedestrian bridge – Timmons Group, VHB, and Kimley-Horn.

View [proposed designs for the ERT Lambert's Point Pedestrian Bridge here](#).

About The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides the planning, program, and advocacy for the Elizabeth River Trail, (a designated National Recreation Trail), to connect Naval Station Norfolk to the Virginia Beach Trail. The Elizabeth River Trail runs 10.5 miles through businesses, and historic attractions and is within a 5-minute walk of 28 neighborhoods. The multi-use trail is designed for walking, running, and biking. It comprises 11 sections from Norfolk State University, through Downtown Norfolk and Old Dominion University to NIT Terminals along the Elizabeth River. The Foundation has completed multiple new unique and award-winning amenities, including kayak launches, play sculptures, a double turbo challenge course in Plum Point Park, The Glowline, and most recently, the installation of the first ERT hydration station. Major sponsors include CHKD, Downtown Norfolk Council, PRA Group, and the City of Norfolk. elizabethrivertrail.org

About Work Program Architects

Work Program Architects (WPA) is an architecture and urban design firm seeking to strengthen community through a collaborative design process. Known for its work across civic, cultural, housing and educational sectors, the firm's multi-disciplinary approach results in projects unique to their location that advance social, economic and coastal resilience. WPA is based in Norfolk, Virginia, with a studio in Raleigh, North Carolina. wparch.com