



# Preserving & Creating Safe Multimodal Access Semmes to Forest Hill

**Goal:** *Establish continuous, safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure connecting Semmes Avenue to the Westover Hills commercial node.*



## Issue Overview

**Problem:** The current traffic configuration at the Semmes/Forest Hill junction is built almost exclusively for car traffic, leading to friction points between other modes of transport.

-  **Systemic Corridor Gaps:** The abrupt end of the bike lanes forces cyclists to merge into car traffic with little warning, putting both at risk.
-  **Forced behavior:** The lack of a safe cycle path through said juncture often leads to people on bikes riding on the sidewalk, which can lead to friction with pedestrians, particularly around the curve at Reedy Creek bridge.
-  **Infrastructure Obstructions:** Currently, due to lack of parking and/or designated lanes for buses by this pinchpoint, buses end up blocking the dedicated bike lane and sidewalk in order to not block car traffic. These blockages force cyclists into fast-moving traffic and push pedestrians onto the grass or street, creating significant hazards for children, families, and residents.

## Who is impacted by this pinch point?

- Residents, commuters, and visitors traveling along Semmes and Forest Hill who experience bottlenecks (reducing vehicle travel to one lane while expanding bicycle facilities would alleviate congestion and improve safety for all users).
- Neighbors walking or biking to the South of the James Farmers Market.
- Parents and caregivers walking young children to daycare at Forest Hill Presbyterian.
- Families living west of PHSSA who seek safe, dedicated pathways home for their children without exposing them to vehicular traffic.
- Families living east of Forest Hill Park zoned for Westover Hills Elementary who lack continuous multimodal routes to school.
- People on bikes navigating the abrupt end of the bike lane at this juncture.
- Local businesses in Woodland Heights that benefit from safer street designs, calm traffic, and enhanced customer access.
- Vision Zero advocates supporting Richmond's commitment to eliminating traffic injuries and fatalities through safe roadway design.
- Blue Zones and public health advocates promoting active living, walkable neighborhoods, and connected infrastructure.
- Anyone who ever mentioned that Semmes Ave should be slower and/or safer.
- Take a peek at the missing point: <https://useful.bike/post/824947046930890752/bike-lanes-and-future-bike-lanes-in-richmond-july>

# How to Take Action: Step-by-Step Guide

## Step 1: Send an Email of Support

Send your advocacy email to the primary decision-makers, and CC key local representatives based on your neighborhood or involvement. Scroll down to the [Email Template](#) section for ready-to-use text! AND [sign a petition!](#)

## Step 2: Attend Community Meetings & Advocate

- **[Woodland Heights Civic Association Meeting](#)**: November 11th at 6:30 PM | Woodland Heights Baptist (*All neighbors are welcome*) *If you are in attendance, please ask the WHCA for a letter of support for a connected Semmes/Forest Hill.*
- **[Forest Hill Neighborhood Association Meeting](#)**: October 20th at 7:00 PM | Forest Hill Presbyterian *If you are in attendance, please ask the FHNA for a letter of support for a connected Semmes/Forest Hill.*
- **[Swansboro West Civic Association Meeting](#)**: Thursday, October 15th at 6:00 PM | Swansboro Elementary *If you are in attendance, please ask Swansboro West for a letter of support for a connected Semmes/Forest Hill.*
- **[PHSSA PTA Meeting](#)**: Reach out or help organize sharing information with families
- **[Semmes Avenue Safety Committee \(Zoom\)](#)**: October 28th at 6:00 PM (*More details can be found [here](#)*) *If you are in attendance, please ask the Semmes Safety Committee for a letter of support for a connected Semmes/Forest Hill.*
- **[Activism in Action - Planning for Richmond to be "World-Class"](#)** - September 26th (be sure to swing by the WHCA Neighborhood Picnic afterward!)
- Need some sample slides for your meeting? [Here's a template.](#) feel free to modify for your group/association.

## Step 3: Submit FY28 Budget Feedback

- Submit feedback on the FY28 Budget to ensure that safe multimodal transportation improvements are prioritized. Your voice is an important part of that process. Please take a moment to share your priorities, ideas, and concerns through [this feedback form](#).

## Step 4: Submit RVA311 Tickets (Ongoing)

- Continue to submit RVA311 tickets whenever you notice infrastructure needs or safety issues along the corridor: [Submit an RVA311 Request](#).



# Key Stakeholders & Contact Directory

## 1. Primary Decision-Makers (Put in the "TO" field)

- **Andy Boenau (Richmond Department of Transportation):** [Andy.Boenau@rva.gov](mailto:Andy.Boenau@rva.gov) , [askpublicworks@rva.gov](mailto:askpublicworks@rva.gov)
- **Patrick Herrel (Richmond Public Schools):** [pherrel@rvaschools.net](mailto:pherrel@rvaschools.net)

## 2. Relevant Community Contacts (Put in the "CC" field)

Copy and paste the relevant email addresses into your email's CC field based on your neighborhood or school affiliation:

| Woodland Heights / 5th District /Swansboro                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Forest Hill / 4th District                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Patrick Henry Charter Community                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Richmond Bike Community                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>City Council:</b><br><a href="mailto:Stephanie.Lynch...">Stephanie.Lynch...</a><br><b>Woodland Heights Civic Association:</b><br><a href="mailto:president@wood...">president@wood...</a><br><br><b>Springhill Neighborhood Association:</b><br><a href="mailto:vtarchitek@gmai...">vtarchitek@gmai...</a><br><a href="mailto:austinfarrell424...">austinfarrell424...</a><br><b>Semmes Ave Safety Committee:</b><br><a href="mailto:pippahollowa@gm...">pippahollowa@gm...</a><br><b>Swansboro West:</b><br><a href="mailto:rvaswansborow...">rvaswansborow...</a> | <b>City Council:</b><br><a href="mailto:sarah.abubaker@rv...">sarah.abubaker@rv...</a><br><b>Neighborhood Assoc:</b><br><a href="mailto:info@foresthillneigh...">info@foresthillneigh...</a><br><b>Bliley:</b><br><a href="mailto:fhblileyassn@ao...">fhblileyassn@ao...</a><br><b>Westover Hills:</b><br><a href="mailto:westoverhillsNA@g...">westoverhillsNA@g...</a> | <b>Admin:</b><br><a href="mailto:thudson@rvaschools.net">thudson@rvaschools.net</a><br><b>PHSSA Board:</b><br><a href="mailto:antione.green@patrickhenrycharter.org">&lt;antione.green@patrickhenrycharter.org&gt;</a> ,<br><a href="mailto:michael.kucera@patrickhenrycharter.org">&lt;michael.kucera@patrickhenrycharter.org&gt;</a> ,<br><a href="mailto:justin.white@patrickhenrycharter.org">&lt;justin.white@patrickhenrycharter.org&gt;</a><br><b>PTA:</b><br><a href="mailto:phssaptapres@gmail.c...">phssaptapres@gmail.c...</a><br><br><b>RPS School Board:</b><br><a href="mailto:srizzi@rvaschools.net">srizzi@rvaschools.net</a><br><br><i>*Please know that the school based team at PHSSA can't make these changes occur, they'll need backing from above - but they can advocate for all families and neighbors.</i> | <b>BikeWalk:</b><br><a href="mailto:bikewalkrva@sportsba...">bikewalkrva@sportsba...</a><br><b>Useful Bike:</b><br><a href="mailto:murden@gmail.com">murden@gmail.com</a> |

| 6th District<br>(Manchester,<br>Blackwell)                                                                                                        | 9th District (Behind<br>the Westover<br>Node/Janke)                                                                                                                                            | Media Outlets                                | Other Stakeholders                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>City Council:</b><br>ellen.robertson...<br><br><b>Association:</b><br>manchesterallia...<br><br><b>School Board:</b><br>aholton@rvaschools.net | <b>City Council:</b><br>nicole.jones@rva.gov<br><br><b>Forest View Civic Association:</b><br>korenalew@gmail.com<br>posthumus.lg@gmail.com<br><br><b>Cedarhurst:</b><br>cedarhurstva@gmail.com | <b>The Richmonder</b><br>news@richmonder.org | <b>Mayor Avula:</b><br>RVAMayor@rva.gov<br><b>Richmond Budget and Strategic Planning:</b><br>AskBudget@rva.gov<br><b>VDOT:</b><br>vdotinfo@vdot.virginia.gov<br>dale.totten@vdot.virginia.gov<br><b>LQC:</b><br>askpublicworks@rva.gov |

## Email Template

Feel free to adapt or use the sample text below. **Adding personal stories**—such as walking children to school, navigating blocked lanes, or commuting along Semmes—helps highlight the real-world impact.

### Sample Email Text:

**Subject:** Prioritizing Community Safety Through a Connected Multimodal Pathway from Semmes to Forest Hill

**To:** Andy.Boenau@rva.gov , askpublicworks@rva.gov , pherrel@rvaschools.net

**CC:** *[Relevant community contacts based on your neighborhood or affiliation from the [Key Stakeholders](#) section above]*

Dear Mr. Boenau and Mr. Herrell,

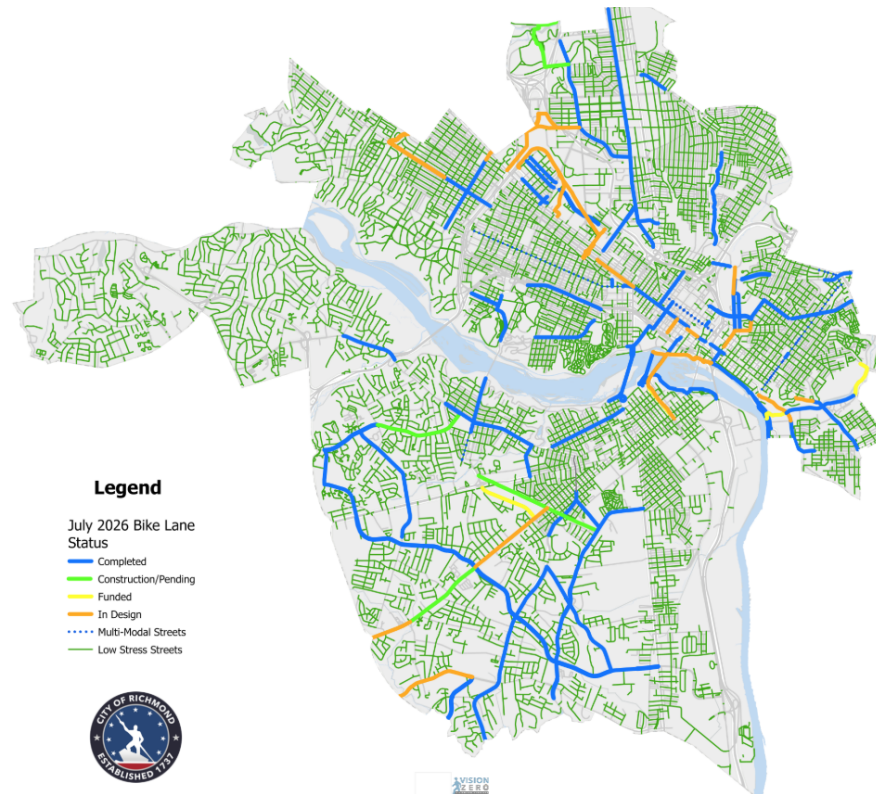
I am writing to share my strong support for creating a continuous, safe, multimodal pathway connecting Semmes Avenue to Forest Hill Avenue. We have an amazing opportunity to design infrastructure that protects and serves everyone in our community.

Ensuring safe, seamless connections along this corridor is essential for the health, well-being, and safety of all residents, visitors, and students, regardless of how they travel.

I urge the City of Richmond and Richmond Public Schools to collaborate on solutions that prioritize safety across all modes and truly establish a continuous multimodal corridor. Please prioritize completing the missing links between Semmes Avenue and Forest Hill Avenue to provide a unified, safe network for students, families, and neighborhood commuters alike.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to creating safe, accessible streets for our entire community.





## Sample Association Letters - Copy and modify for your neighborhood/civic association:

- Letter of Support - Semmes to Forest Hill Multimodal Access
- OR Civic Resolution - Semmes to Forest Hill Multimodal Connectivity

### Additional Background & Timeline

- Overview & Analysis: [Does it Have to Be Bike Lanes vs. School Buses?](#)
- [Past emails/timeline for context](#)
- [Community Feedback & correspondence](#) <Additional contributions welcome>
- [Previous petition](#)
- [A Call to Action for the Pinch Point on Forest](#)

- [School Zone Road Safety Assessment for PHSSA](#)

# **RICHMONDERS DESERVE STREETS DESIGNED FOR EVERYONE**

**GET INVOLVED AND LEARN HOW  
YOU CAN HELP—VISIT:  
[TINYURL.COM/SEMME2026](https://tinyurl.com/semmes2026)**



**Have you ever walked,  
biked, or drove the “pinch  
point” between Semmes  
and Forest Hill and wished  
that it was safer for  
everyone?**

**Then please let your voice  
be heard and advocate for  
change!**

## **DEMAND SAFER STREETS**

**Send an email to key  
city change makers:  
A quick template + contact  
information can be accessed  
here: [tinyurl.com/semmes2026](https://tinyurl.com/semmes2026)**

# Historical Context & Correspondence

Wednesday, September 16th



Stephanie Lynch

to me ▾

Wed, Sep 16, 1:20 PM (5 days ago)



Amy may have shared but I'm 1,000% down for this. Feel free to let folks know that I'll be doing everything possible to push it...as I understand it- it's a very long road to hoe but we like a challenge here in the 5th! Great organizing, as always :)

PS- I have lots of personal stories to share about this!

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Friday, September 11th

Hi Andy & Patrick,

Glad to hear that you've been involved in conversations around safe pickup and drop-off operations in conjunction with RPS. If you're able to share the reports or studies you've referenced, we'd appreciate the opportunity to review them. This week's situation, where a bus was positioned with two wheels blocking the bike lane and two wheels blocking the sidewalk, doesn't seem consistent with the goal of safe, multimodal access, particularly when considering the needs of people walking, biking, using wheelchairs, or otherwise traveling without a car.

Are you able to share the reports or studies you mentioned? If they're not available electronically, I'm also happy to stop by City Hall one afternoon to review them in person.

And apologies if my initial emails weren't clear, Andy. Kids biking to PHSSA from Woodland Heights isn't the issue or the sticking point here. For additional context, PHSSA is not a neighborhood school; it is a citywide lottery school. That's not the correct verbiage, but it should help as you consider transit plans. If we're considering this from a citywide perspective, we'd need to account for that and potentially adjust bike bus routes accordingly. I've also looped in the PHSSA PTA if they want to chat further with you about a bike bus, bike buses are AWESOME but not the solution we're working to address.

The immediate issue is greater than just RPS buses blocking bike and pedestrian pathways multiple times a day (and at this point that should be a quick fix between RDOT and RPS). More broadly, this is one piece of a larger issue: the lack of a connected bicycle route from Semmes Avenue to Forest Hill Avenue. The current configuration creates conflicts between buses, people walking and biking, and other users of the corridor, impacting both the school and the surrounding community.

I'm already on the agenda for the November 11 WHCA meeting and am still waiting to hear back from FHNA. At this meeting, we'll increase neighborhood-wide support for increased multimodal safety and a connected bicycle network from Semmes to Forest Hill. I understand that previous studies have also supported a potential roundabout at Roanoke and Forest Hill to address the pinch point at the bridge and improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

We'd really like to have a conversation with you and/or representatives from the City and RPS before the November 11 WHCA meeting to discuss both the immediate bus-loading issue and the larger corridor. (I'm sure you and your team are invited to the November 11 WHCA meeting too, I've cc-ed the Woodland Heights Board.)

Some potential elements for the City to evaluate include:

- Reducing Semmes Avenue to one general-purpose vehicle lane in front of PHSSA, where appropriate, and using the reclaimed space for safer bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian space, and/or dedicated bus loading that doesn't impact cyclists and pedestrians.
- Creating a continuous bicycle connection through the PHSSA frontage and toward Forest Hill Avenue, rather than allowing the existing bicycle facility to terminate at one of the most challenging portions of the corridor.
- Evaluating traffic speeds and pedestrian/bicycle conflicts along Semmes, particularly around the school and at the current end of the bike lane.
- Revisiting the potential roundabout at Forest Hill and Roanoke Avenue, including whether the neighborhood's previous grant or a new funding opportunity could support the project.
- Looking at the corridor as a connected system and identifying improvements that address safety and accessibility for people walking, biking, using wheelchairs, taking transit, and driving.

**If you're available, I'd appreciate the opportunity to schedule a conversation in the coming weeks.** I'm happy to coordinate with you and bring together interested neighbors and community members so that we can have a productive discussion and identify concrete next steps before the November 11 WHCA meeting, since that's so far away.

I'd also appreciate it if you could send along the reports or studies you referenced, or let me know when would be a convenient time for me to review them at City Hall.

Thanks again, and apologies that my initial email didn't clearly articulate the broader issue. I'm hopeful we can work together on both an immediate solution for the bus-loading conflicts and a longer-term approach to creating a safer, connected multimodal corridor.

In the love of Richmond,  
Emily

## Wednesday, September 9th

Hey, hey Mr. Herrel and Mr. Boenau,

Looping back in to discuss next steps. I've BCC'd some PHSSA parents, some Woodland Heights/Forest Hill neighbors, and the PHSSA Admin team. We know solving all these transportation issues isn't the responsibility of the PHSSA admin (they have a building to run day-to-day!), but they can play an important role in advocating for the safety of their students and the neighborhood that Patrick Henry calls home.

I'm happy to take the lead on next steps from the neighborhood side, but some work needs to happen in partnership with Richmond Public Schools and the Department of Transportation.

Rather than treating the current issue as simply where school buses can park, I'd love for us to use this as an opportunity to develop a transportation plan that works for students arriving by bus, families driving, pedestrians, cyclists, and people using mobility devices.

I see all of us with distinct but connected roles:

### **Richmond Public Schools / Patrick Henry**

The most immediate issue is the arrival and dismissal configuration at PHSSA.

I'd ask RPS Transportation and PHSSA to:

- Commit to preserving the existing bicycle lane as we work through the bus-loading issue. If buses are currently obstructing the bike lane (and yesterday when I went by PHSSA on the way home from daycare pickup they were also obstructing the sidewalk), the solution should address the bus operation rather than remove the infrastructure.
- Evaluate alternative bus staging/loading locations, including the potential use of the paved City-owned alley to access W. 34th Street. (The neighborhood is happy to support you with getting that block on board, though, it is city property!)
- Revisit the parent pickup/drop-off configuration to see whether existing zones can be adjusted to reduce conflicts.
- Work with the City on temporary or pilot solutions, including the possibility of using one lane of Semmes during arrival/dismissal if that can be done safely.
- Participate in a broader multimodal safety assessment of the area rather than evaluating the issue solely through the lens of bus operations.
- Engage PHSSA families in the process before making any decision that would remove or reduce bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

I recognize that changing arrival and dismissal procedures midyear is operationally difficult. But if the existing configuration creates conflicts that put children and other road users at risk, I think it's worth looking at what can be changed now while also developing a longer-term solution.

### **City of Richmond / Department of Transportation**

The larger opportunity is to look beyond the school frontage and address the corridor itself.

I'd love for the City and RPS to explore treating Semmes Avenue → Forest Hill Avenue → Roanoke Avenue as a multimodal corridor, with PHSSA as an important part of that conversation.

Specifically, I think the City should evaluate:

- Reducing Semmes Avenue to one general-purpose vehicle lane in front of PHSSA, where appropriate, and using the reclaimed space for safer bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian space, and/or dedicated bus loading.
- Creating a continuous bicycle connection through the PHSSA frontage and toward Forest Hill Avenue rather than allowing the existing bicycle facility to terminate at one of the most challenging portions of the corridor.
- Evaluating traffic speeds and pedestrian/bicycle conflicts along Semmes, particularly around the school and where the bike lane ends.
- Revisiting the potential roundabout at Forest Hill and Roanoke Avenue, including whether the neighborhood's previous grant or a new funding opportunity could support the project.

- Looking at the corridor as a connected system, rather than treating the school bus issue, bike lane, Roanoke intersection, and Forest Hill connection as separate projects.

I think there's a compelling opportunity here to solve an immediate school transportation problem while also addressing a longstanding transportation-safety issue between Woodland Heights, Forest Hill, and eventually Westover Hills.

**From the neighborhood side**, with the good will from Richmond Public Schools and the Department of Transportation, I'm happy to help coordinate building a coalition of PHSSA families, Woodland Heights residents, Forest Hill residents, cyclists, pedestrians, and other neighborhood stakeholders who support a safe multimodal solution. This will help to build broader support for a multimodal corridor project, rather than framing this solely as a dispute over the bike lane. And ensure that we can show up collectively when the City, RPS, or Council members are ready to discuss specific proposals.

The question isn't really, *"Where can we put the buses if the bike lane stays?"* It's: *"How can we design this part of Semmes Avenue so school buses, families, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists can all move safely?"*

We need a solution that recognizes that a public school and the surrounding neighborhoods are served by many different ways of getting around.

If RPS and the City are willing to engage, I'm happy to help coordinate the neighborhood side and bring people together around a concrete set of proposals. It would be great to identify an initial meeting or working group and determine what can be addressed immediately versus what needs to be developed as a longer-term corridor project. We can also bring this to both the Woodland Heights and Forest Hill Neighborhood Associations at an upcoming meeting.

Thanks for being willing to engage on this. I really believe there is an opportunity here to turn what is currently a frustrating and potentially dangerous situation into a much better model for how we design transportation around our schools and neighborhoods.

In the love of Richmond,  
Emily

## Wednesday, September 2nd

<https://useful.bike/post/826661998506000384/does-it-have-to-be-bike-lanes-vs-school-buses>

## Tuesday, September 1st

Dear Mr. Herrel,

I am writing to express serious concern regarding your recent comment that Richmond Public Schools may consider removing the dedicated bicycle lane in front of Patrick Henry School of Science and Arts (PHSSA).

I strongly urge RPS not to remove or diminish this bicycle facility as a solution to school-bus operations. If buses are routinely parking in or obstructing the existing bicycle lane, that is an operational and traffic-management problem that should be addressed directly—not by eliminating infrastructure that provides a designated space for people who walk and bicycle.

In fact, the current situation demonstrates precisely why the bicycle lane is needed.

Neighbors have repeatedly observed school buses occupying the bicycle lane, forcing people on bicycles into the sidewalk or into other travel lanes. I experienced the consequences firsthand just last Friday evening. I was walking on the sidewalk in front of PHSSA while pushing my seven-month-old child in a stroller when a cyclist, unable to safely use the obstructed bicycle facility, was forced onto the sidewalk and pushed me and my stroller into the grass to pass. No parent, pedestrian, or cyclist should have to choose between entering the roadway and being displaced from a sidewalk in order to navigate safely around a school.

The research on this issue is remarkably consistent: safe, connected infrastructure matters when communities want people to walk and bicycle.

The National Institute for Transportation and Communities' research on protected bicycle facilities in U.S. cities found that bicycle ridership increased on every facility studied, with increases ranging from 21% to 171%. More than one-quarter of surveyed riders reported that the protected facilities caused them to ride more generally, and people reported substantially greater comfort with physical separation than with painted bicycle lanes alone.

Research on bicycle lanes also does not support the premise that simply removing a bicycle lane makes a street safer. A Federal Highway Administration Crash Modification Factors study of bicycle lanes in New York City found that installation of bicycle lanes did not increase crashes, despite increases in bicycling, with researchers identifying reduced vehicle speeds and fewer conflicts as likely explanations. The FHWA clearinghouse reports an overall crash reduction factor of approximately 5.6% for roadway segments in that study.

The federal guidance on Safe Routes to School is equally clear about the importance of providing children with safe options for walking and bicycling. The Federal Highway Administration specifically notes that busy roads can determine whether children are able to walk or bicycle to school safely and emphasizes creating space for people to walk and bicycle alongside other transportation modes.

This is also a public-health issue. A systematic review of 68 studies found that children who actively travel to school are generally more physically active, with moderate-quality evidence supporting the promotion of active school transportation. The review specifically found a positive association between cycling to and from school and cardiovascular fitness. Another systematic review found that infrastructure changes have predominantly positive effects on bicycling, particularly for people living closer to those improvements.

And importantly, this is an equity issue—not simply a transportation preference issue.

PHSSA is a public school open to Richmond students through a citywide lottery. Current VDOE data show that 41.2% of PHSSA students were economically disadvantaged in 2024–25, and RPS currently identifies PHSSA as a Title I school. That makes it particularly important that access to the school not be designed around the assumption that every family can or should drive.

Transportation infrastructure determines who can safely access a public institution. Families who walk, bicycle, use mobility devices, take transit, or combine modes are not asking for a special accommodation; they are legitimate users of the public right-of-way. Eliminating the infrastructure that protects those users because buses are being improperly accommodated would effectively prioritize one transportation mode over all others.

There is also a broader educational reason to protect PHSSA's accessibility. Research on socioeconomic integration consistently finds academic and social benefits associated with diverse learning environments. The Century Foundation's review of integrated schools reports stronger academic outcomes for students in socioeconomically diverse schools, while research on school integration has found benefits extending beyond

test scores to social cohesion and students' experiences with peers from different backgrounds. We should therefore be thinking carefully about how transportation decisions affect a school's ability to remain accessible to a broad cross-section of Richmond families, rather than inadvertently making active transportation more difficult.

I am therefore asking RPS leadership to take the following actions:

1. Commit to preserving the existing bicycle lane in front of PHSSA.
2. Conduct a formal review of school-bus loading and parking practices at the site, including observations during arrival and dismissal.
3. Identify an alternative location or configuration for bus staging that does not obstruct bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure.
4. Consider alternatives that have been used at this location previously, including utilizing the neighboring alleys where appropriate or temporarily using one lane of Semmes Avenue during arrival and dismissal.
5. Conduct a multimodal safety assessment of the area that considers the needs of students arriving by bus, car, bicycle, on foot, and by mobility device—not simply the operational needs of buses.
6. Include neighborhood residents, cyclists, pedestrians, and PHSSA families in developing the solution before any bicycle infrastructure is removed.

I want to be clear that I understand the operational challenges associated with transporting students safely. I am not asking RPS to choose bicycles over school buses. I am asking RPS to design a transportation solution that allows school buses, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to coexist safely.

Removing the bicycle lane would not solve the underlying problem of buses obstructing it. It would simply transfer the burden of that problem onto the people walking and bicycling through the corridor—and, as my experience last Friday illustrates, onto parents and young children who are simply trying to use the sidewalk safely.

RPS has an opportunity here to demonstrate what a modern, equitable school transportation system looks like: one that accommodates school buses while also protecting the people who walk and bicycle to and around our schools.

I respectfully ask that you reconsider any proposal to remove or reduce bicycle infrastructure at PHSSA and instead direct staff to develop a safe, multimodal solution to the existing bus-loading problem.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and would appreciate knowing what alternatives RPS is considering before any decision is made regarding the bicycle lane.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to the safety and accessibility of Richmond's students and residents.

Sincerely,  
Emily McMillen

**January 2026**

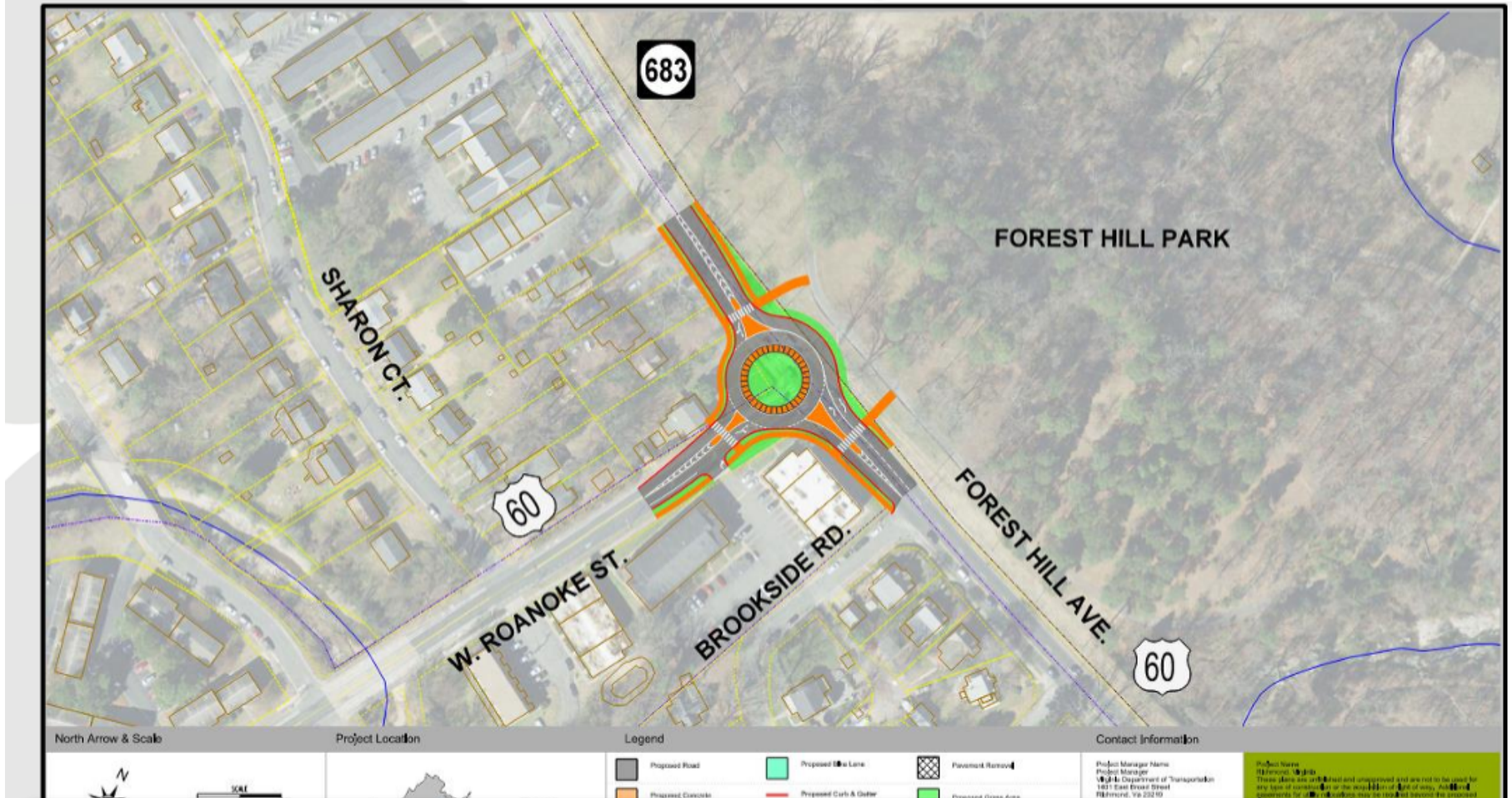
Previous petition by Michael: <https://c.org/pVpNCWLPS7>



# Proposed Solutions from Multimodal Activists and/or VDOT

Project Pipeline/Smart Scale: [PDF ri01—project-pipeline-final-report—richmond—semmes-ave.pdf](#)

Figure 2-3. Route 60 – Layout for



City of Richmond PHSSA Safety/Transportation Audit: [PDF CityofRichmond\\_SchoolZoneRSAs\\_PHSSA\\_01.12.26.pdf](#)



Figure 87 Semmes Avenue Proposed Shared Transit / Bike Lane (Left)



Figure 88 Semmes Avenue proposed Buffered Bike Lane and Parking (Right)

# Forest Hill Ave & Roanoke St Redesign



# Semmes Ave Safety Committee

Dear Semmes Avenue Neighbors,

The Semmes Avenue Safety committee will meet on Zoom on Wednesday, October 28, 2026, at 6:00 PM. I know this is over a month away, but letting you know now so you can get it on your calendars. I'll send out a reminder email early that week.

We have invited representatives from the Planning and Development Review, RDOT, RPD, and Public Works to update us on a range of issues including sidewalks, bike lanes, speed data and ticketing, and more. They will be able to answer questions from attendees as well.

The zoom link is [here](#) and also below.

Feel free to share this invitation with other interested neighbors.

Sincerely,

Pippa Holloway

[2510 Semmes Avenue](#)

[pippaholloway@gmail.com](mailto:pippaholloway@gmail.com)

## Semmes Avenue Safety Committee

### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85015402943?pwd=Rk8xdWFIQnhuQk16R0xXRWZRbGxjUT09>

Meeting ID: 850 1540 2943 Passcode: 938443

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### Sign up for Access Newsletter (Department of Public Works):

<https://rva.us18.list-manage.com/profile?u=f99abcad558960f82c27f3ada&id=7d89dcce2d&e=745dcd3cc9&c=2641de44b6>

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## Sample Association Letters

- [Civic Resolution - Semmes to Forest Hill Multimodal Connectivity](#)
- [Letter of Support - Semmes to Forest Hill Multimodal Access](#)