
Memo

To: Tonya Swartzendruber, Planning Manager— Transportation, Albemarle County
From: Logan Ende, Regional Planner, TJPDC/CA-MPO
Date: January 15, 2026
Reference: FY26 BUILD Rivanna Bike/Ped Bridge Letter of Support

Background:

The Albemarle County Board of Supervisors previously supported the Charlottesville-Albemarle Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CA-MPO) application for funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation's FY2025 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program (DTOS59-25-RA-RAISE) to complete the preliminary engineering phase of work for the Rivanna River Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing, which would provide a vital multi-modal connection between the Pantops growth area in Albemarle County and the rest of the Charlottesville-Albemarle urbanized area. CA-MPO, staffed by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), has been working towards the construction of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge across the Rivanna River since 2019. CA-MPO has completed multiple planning phases of the project in coordination with staff and elected officials from two local jurisdictions, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and community and public stakeholders. Through these efforts the project has evolved from a general idea to the selection of a bridge location and the development of a conceptualized design.

The proposed bridge is located in Albemarle County within the Charlottesville-Albemarle urbanized area (population 104,191 based on the 2020 census). On the west side of the river, the bridge landing would be located on privately developed property with an existing public use easement (Albemarle County Census Tract 104.02). This western landing site would facilitate a direct connection between the bridge landing and downtown Charlottesville via two local roads: East Market Street or Broadway Street. The western landing site, while physically located in Albemarle County, is less than two tenths of a mile from the City of Charlottesville boundary.

On the east side of the river, the bridge landing would be located on public property owned by Albemarle County within the established Pantops growth area (Albemarle County Census Tract 105.02). To provide a connection to the transportation network on the east side of the river, the project includes the construction of a shared use path from the eastern landing site through privately owned property, ending at the intersection of State Farm Boulevard and Peter Jefferson Parkway. From there, travelers could use existing pedestrian pathways, access newly offered micro-transit services within the Pantops growth area, or continue their trip along the existing Pantops road network.

Discussion

The CA-MPO would like Albemarle County's support for its FY26 BUILD Grant Program application for the preliminary engineering phase of the Rivanna River Bike/Ped Bridge. As a member of the CA-MPO, the county has already actively contributed to the planning work completed to date on this project. The bridge

will improve the overall connectivity of the Pantops growth area to the larger urbanized area, integrate with economic development and revitalization goals for sites in close proximity to the Rivanna River, and support Albemarle County's Climate Action Plan recommendations by providing safe and comfortable multi-modal infrastructure as an alternative to single occupancy vehicle use.

This bridge is supported by the Pantops Master Plan and the Urban Rivanna River Corridor Plan, which were both accepted by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. The bridge is also supported by the newly completed Albemarle Comprehensive Plan (AC44), particularly the plan's Development Area Goals & Objectives. These plans outline the need for balancing development pressures with minimizing environmental impact to the river ecosystem, a need to which this bridge responds directly: creating increased opportunities for active transportation and bike/ped access to the river's trail systems. The bridge will also support the focus areas identified in Phase 1 of the Broadway Blueprint Economic Development Revitalization Study, completed in 2022 by the county, including the bolstering of transportation infrastructure to complement changing trends in commercial and residential activity.

The CA-MPO seeks the county's continued support for this application to complete the preliminary engineering project phase as a next step towards the construction of this bridge in the form of a letter of support addressed to the U.S Department of Transportation. The application will be submitted by CA-MPO to the U.S. Department of Transportation by February 24, 2026.