

# Policy Briefing Summary

## City Council



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<b>Regarding:</b>	<b>Dairy Road Bridge Public Hearing Summary Presentation for Endorsement</b>
<b>Staff Contact(s):</b>	Michael Goddard, Deputy Director, Eric Morris
<b>Presenter:</b>	<b>Najeeb Behnam</b>
<b>Date of Proposed Action:</b>	December 15, 2025

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### Issue

Updates and Q&A on Dairy Road Bridge

### Background / Rule

The City of Charlottesville Department of Public Works has received \$12,620,000 in grant funding through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to reconstruct the Dairy Road bridge over the Route 250 bypass. The existing bridge has reached the end of its useful life. Recent inspection data dated March 6, 2025, shows the overall condition of the bridge as “poor.” A full replacement of the bridge is necessary and has been funded through VDOT’s State of Good Repair (SGR) program using a combination of state and federal dollars.

### Analysis

A design public hearing was held on July 15, 2025, at Walker Upper Elementary School to inform the public and adjacent neighborhoods about the project needs, background, and construction impacts. A 10-day comment period was provided after the meeting to allow any citizen to provide comment on the project. A total of 16 formal comments were received in writing or orally through the City-provided court reporter present at the public hearing. In general, feedback was focused on the inconvenience of the detour, the appearance of the bridge, and the duration of construction and detour.

The City of Charlottesville will do the following based on feedback received at the Public Hearing:

1. Numerous requests were received to make the bridge more visually appealing. The City will add aesthetic and architectural treatments to the proposed bridge design. These will include painting the girders, adding a decorative steel railing in lieu of a concrete-only barrier, and finishing all foundation walls with an architectural stone finish. The bridge will more closely mimic the Route 250 bridge at McIntire Road/John W. Warner Parkway when construction is complete.
2. The length of construction was commonly cited as longer than desired. The City will explore ways to design the bridge in a way that allows for quicker construction and plans to provide monetary incentives for the contractor to open the bridge ahead of the contractual schedule, to the extent possible.
3. Finally, the impacts of the proposed detour were a common concern. The City plans to closely monitor traffic patterns once the detour is implemented to see if additional mitigation measures are necessary.

A second public meeting is planned in mid-2026 prior to construction to update the public on the project progress, provide a rendering of the proposed bridge, and hear concerns/comments regarding the project and detour.

**Financial Impact**

The entire project is funded through State and Federal sources provided by VDOT. Delay in issuing design approval could impact the anticipated schedule to advertise the project for construction in mid-2026. Significant delays could increase the project costs as inflation continues to push construction costs upwards over time. Additional funds are not guaranteed from VDOT, and the City of Charlottesville should expect to be required to fund any shortfalls to complete the project beyond the allocated grant funds.

**Recommendation**

City staff recommends Council issue “design approval” to proceed with the current project design, which will require closure of the bridge and a full detour during construction.

**Recommended Motion (if Applicable)**

Motion to proceed with bridge design as initiated with the inclusion of aesthetic treatments as approved for funding by VDOT

**Attachments**

1. Dairy Road PublicHearing Transcript Appendices v2
2. Dairy Road Bridge Replacement - Council Presentation..
3. 20251029\_Dairy Rd Bridge Renderings\_rev