

## Section 5: EVALUATION OF MULTI-USE TRAIL CORRIDORS

During the spring of 2019, VDOT worked closely with environmental agencies as well as stakeholder agencies, localities, planning district commissions, and regional transportation planning organizations, and special interest groups to identify the purpose and need for the ATP Trail Study, which set the goals of the study and established the primary criteria for the development and evaluation of the multi-use trail corridor options.

In order to identify a recommended preferred trail corridor that represented the least environmentally impactful option, while also considering cost and feasibility of implementation, the evaluation of multi-use trail corridor options followed a two-step process to refine the six preliminary corridor options under consideration. The corridor options were examined as outlined below, following a preliminary and detailed evaluation approach.

- **Preliminary evaluation** – included evaluation of six corridor options, based on the following considerations:
  - Ability to meet purpose and need, considering the identified need elements and the criteria below. As part of the preliminary evaluation, all options were assumed to meet the purpose and need to some degree.
    - Need Element No. 1: Safety, including areas of concern identified by VDOT’s PSAP
    - Need Element No. 2: Connectivity, including public and STAG-defined destinations of interest<sup>12</sup>
    - Need Element No. 3: Consistency with existing or planned active transportation facilities
  - Environmental considerations, including potential for impacts to wetlands and streams. The corridor options representing the least impact to wetlands and streams were carried forward for detailed evaluation.
- **Detailed evaluation** – included refined evaluation of two corridor options, representing the least impactful options to wetlands and streams, with consideration given to cost and feasibility of implementation in order to identify the most practicable recommendation for a preferred corridor at a planning-level stage of project development.

Following the identification of the preferred corridor option, further evaluation and analysis was performed to refine the corridor conceptual design and cost estimate in order to allow for identification of segments appropriate for potential future project application and funding.

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<sup>12</sup> According to AASHTO's *Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities*, the majority of pedestrian trips are between 0.25 and one mile long, therefore, the study utilized 0.5 miles as the distance for which to identify if a corridor option allowed access to a destination of interest (AASHTO, 2012).