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## **LEGARE BRIDGE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document investigates concrete benefits to West Ashley and the City of Charleston resulting from the completion of the Legare Bridge Bicycle and Pedestrian Path. It was compiled by the Department of Planning, Preservation and Sustainability.

The 0.4 mile addition of bicycle and pedestrian space will connect West Ashley to downtown. In addition to providing a safe and convenient crossing, the path will connect citizens to jobs without the use of a car, increase neighborhood desirability, improve retail business, bring increased tourism to West Ashley, and make Charleston a more attractive city for the next generation of innovative business owners and employees.

### **II. A SAFE AND CONVENIENT CONNECTION**

- **Compared to the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, the Legare Bridge is far more accessible to cyclists and pedestrians.** At only 0.4 miles long, the West Ashley bridge is  $\frac{1}{6}$  the length of the Ravenel Bridge connecting to Mt. Pleasant, which is nearly 2.5 miles in length. The incline of the Ravenel Bridge is more severe, with a maximum height 186' above the water, compared to the gentle slope of the Ashley bridges. Finally, in terms of walking time, an average person, walking at 3.1 mph, takes about 48 minutes to cross the Ravenel Bridge, but only 8 minutes to cross the Legare Bridge.
- **Also compared to the Mt. Pleasant crossing, the Ashley bridge will serve a greater population.** 13,294 people live within a 20 minute bike ride of the bridge in West Ashley, vs. 9,158 people in the same radius of the Mt. Pleasant crossing. (Appendix A Table 1)

- **The Legare Bridge crossing will extend the West Ashley Greenway, connecting to paths and parks.** The 8.5-mile West Ashley Greenway connects 4,551 residents and 613 area businesses to downtown and to the larger regional bicycle network, which includes the 2.5 mile West Ashley Bikeway. The City of Charleston has recently rebuilt Higgins Pier at the end of the West Ashley Bikeway and also recently acquired the nearby Bender Property with plans to develop a park. A new City park will also be developed at the end of the West Ashley greenway leading onto the Legare Bridge. A safe crossing for the Ashley River will link these key paths and parks to downtown Charleston and the larger region.
- **Usage:** As a result of the shorter length, easier crossing, connection to the Greenway, and larger population served, the City of Charleston estimates that usage of the Legare Bridge bicycle and pedestrian path has potential to be more than double that of the Ravenel Bridge's already successful bicycle and pedestrian facility, per a 2013 study.

### III. A BENEFIT TO WEST ASHLEY'S ECONOMY

- **The path will provide a car-free connection to jobs. 73,636** jobs are accessible from a 20-minute bike ride of the bike path from the peninsula side. These includes jobs in the hospitality, professional and medical sectors. (Appendix A Table 1)
  - **Hospitality industry.** The bridge connection will provide a route to work for employees in Charleston's many restaurants, bars and hotels.
  - **Downtown employment centers.** Collectively, **5,250** people are employed at the College of Charleston, the Citadel, the School District, Charleston County offices and the City of Charleston. Additionally, a combined **18,125** students attend MUSC, the College of Charleston and the Citadel.
  - **Medical Districts. Together 30,000 employees** work at MUSC, Roper Hospital and the Veterans Affairs hospital, the largest concentration of employees in the Charleston region. Additionally, the growing West Edge district will, at completion, house 2,500 new residents, have 4,280 new jobs, 1,000 hotel rooms and over 1 million square feet of office and retail space all located at the base of the Ashley bridges. (Horizon Project Foundation) **These institutions are all located immediately adjacent to the bridge.**
- **Bike & pedestrian infrastructure increases property values.**
  - **Indianapolis, Indiana.** A 2014 study of Indianapolis's eight-mile (13 km) Indianapolis Cultural Trail by the Indiana University Public Policy Institute found that since its opening in 2008, the value of properties within a block of this high-quality biking and walking trail has risen an astonishing **148 percent**. The value of the nearly 1,800 parcels within 500 feet (152 m) of the trail **increased by more than \$1.01 billion over the same period.** (2)

- **Dallas, Texas.** Since the opening of the 3.5-mile (5.6 km) Katy Trail in the Uptown neighborhood of Dallas in 2006, property values have climbed nearly **80 percent**, to \$3.4 billion, according to Uptown’s business improvement district. (2)
- **Radnor, Pennsylvania.** A 2011 study by the GreenSpace Alliance and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission found that properties within a quarter-mile (0.4 km) of the Radnor Trail in Radnor Township, Pennsylvania, were **valued on average \$69,139 higher than other area properties** further away. Real estate listings in Radnor frequently mention trail access in their advertisements. (2)
- **Minneapolis, Minnesota.** A University of Minnesota study found that, in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, **for every 1,312 feet (400 m) closer a median-priced home is to an off-street bicycle facility, its value increases by \$510.** (2)
- **Nationwide.** A 2009 nationwide study by CEOs for Cities, a cross-sector organization that develops ideas to make U.S. cities more economically successful, found that “houses located in areas with above-average walkability or bikability are worth up to **\$34,000 more** than similar houses in areas with average walkability levels.” (2,3)
- **Bike & pedestrian infrastructure promotes retail visibility & increased sales volume.**
  - 1,406 businesses in the 20-minute West Ashley service area will immediately benefit from the bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Ashley River, and 613 business along the West Ashley Greenway will receive the indirect benefits of increase bicycle and pedestrian customers. (Appendix A Table 1)
  - Retail analysts increasingly value bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure over traffic volumes, and case studies demonstrate that wide streets with fast-moving car traffic tend to depress property values, while buildings on streets with new bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements have appreciated.
    - **Raleigh, NC.** A North Carolina State University Report on bridge completion for the American Tobacco Trail showed that “**Direct expenditures on groceries, retail and restaurants** related to trips made on the trail rose from approximately \$2.4 million pre-bridge to \$6.1 million post-bridge annually for a **total increase of \$3.7 million or 154%.**” (4)
    - **Salt Lake City, Utah.** A study by the Salt Lake City Department of Transportation found that “replacing parking with protected **bike lanes increased retail sales.**” On a main commercial corridor, the improvement of bicycle and pedestrian facilities increased **retail sales by 8.8 percent** over the first six months of the previous year, compared with a citywide increase of only 7 percent. (2)

- **Dunedin, Florida.** A study of the Pinellas Trail, a bicycle and pedestrian path, found that retail **vacancies declined by more than 50 percent after the opening of the popular trail.** New businesses included several restaurants, a bike shop, an outdoor equipment supplier, a bed-and-breakfast operation, and a coffee shop. (2)
  - **San Francisco, California.** A San Francisco State University study found that when the city of San Francisco reduced car lanes and installed bike lanes and wider sidewalks on Valencia Street, **two-thirds of merchants said the increased levels of bicycling and walking improved business.** (2)
  - **Greenville, South Carolina.** Most businesses on Greenville’s new Swamp Rabbit Trail saw 30-50 percent increases in sales after the trail opened in 2011. “Five new businesses decided to open as a result of the trail being built and/or changing location(s) because of their desire to be closer to the trail,” writes researcher Julian A. Reed, a Health Sciences professor at Furman University. More than 400,000 people used the trail last year, according to the report. (5)
- **Bike & pedestrian infrastructure catalyzes redevelopment & tourism.**
    - **Charleston continues to be globally ranked tourist destination.** With 5.15 million annual regional tourists and having just been named the top city in the world by Travel + Leisure Magazine for 2016, Charleston’s tourism industries have never been more successful. The bicycle and pedestrian connection across the Ashley River will bring tourists to West Ashley from downtown, bring visitors staying in West Ashley hotels into downtown without a car, and likely become a tourist destination in itself.
    - **Hilton Head, SC.** Successful coastal destination cities invest in bicycle and pedestrian paths. In Hilton head, “the success of the 15 miles of paved trails in Sea Pines eventually led to the creation of a total of 112 miles of trails across Hilton Head Island and demand for bike rentals went up by more than 25 percent between 2011 and 2014.” (4)
    - **North Carolina.** A North Carolina Department of Transportation study found that a one-time investment of \$6.7 million for a network of bike lanes in the Outer Banks has yielded an annual **nine-to-one return on investment thanks to increased bicycle tourism.** (5)
    - **Bike sharing is coming to Charleston.** This proven bicycle service is used in cities throughout the country, including nearby Savannah and Greenville. Though only viable in the densest parts of the city, West Ashley will benefit from the bike lane over the Ashley River by extending the system across the river.

- **Bicycle & pedestrian infrastructure enhances regional talent retention & recruitment capacity.**
  - The next generation of Americans prefer bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities, and West Ashley can benefit from retaining and recruiting young, high-wage professionals.
    - **Younger people are driving less**, with the percentage of people 16-24 with a driver's license now at its lowest rate since 1963. (1,3)
    - Fifty percent of U.S. residents say that walkability is a top priority or a high priority when considering where to live, according to the Urban Land Institute's *America in 2015* report. (2)
    - According to the U.S. Census, the number of people who traveled to work by bike increased roughly 60 percent between 2000 and 2014. This is the largest percentage increase of all commuting modes tracked by the 2000 Census and the 2008-2012 American Community Survey.(6)
    - In Charleston, the Charleston Regional Development Alliance's recently completed *One Region Global Competitiveness Strategy* specifically recommends for additional bikeways and streets designed for pedestrian, bicycle, motorist and transit use.

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**Appendix A: Table 1**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Area Population</b>	<b>Area Businesses</b>	<b>Area Employees</b>
<b>West Ashley Walk Shed</b>	2,772	214	6,374
<b>West Ashley Bike Shed</b>	13,294	1,406	17,337
<b>West Peninsula Walk Shed</b>	6,273	456	42,491
<b>West Peninsula Bike Shed</b>	34,745	3,563	73,636
<b>East Peninsula Walk Shed</b>	3,527	220	2,043
<b>East Peninsula Bike Shed</b>	34,090	3,634	75,889
<b>Mt. Pleasant Walk Shed</b>	796	130	1,382
<b>Mt. Pleasant Bike Shed</b>	9,158	1,178	10,005
<b>Within .25 Miles of Greenway (Inside 526)</b>	4,551	613	8,935

*Source: Esri Business Analyst: July 2016*







