

Virginia Avenue Tactical Urbanism Bike Lane Pilot:

Year-One Community Feedback Summary

Executive Summary

For more than a decade, Virginia Avenue has appeared in neighborhood and City planning as a bicycle and pedestrian connection through Virginia-Highland. The 2014 Virginia-Highland Master Plan specifically called for bicycle infrastructure on Virginia Avenue between Kanuga Street and North Highland Avenue, building on broader BeltLine and City transportation planning.

In 2025, the Virginia-Highland Civic Association (VHCA) Safe Streets Committee worked with the City and community partners to move a portion of that long-planned connection from paper to the street through a temporary Tactical Urbanism pilot. The purpose was to experience the temporary configuration in a real-world setting, gather community feedback, and develop a record that could inform future consideration of the corridor.

Community engagement throughout the bike lane pilot took several forms, providing multiple opportunities for people to participate throughout the year. The Safe Streets Committee sought feedback through public VHCA Board meetings and Town Halls, community survey, in-person conversations initiated with residents living along and immediately adjacent to the bike lane pilot, outreach to schools and families, conversations with businesses and other stakeholders, and door-to-door outreach to households along Virginia Avenue. The Committee also maintained an open channel for residents to submit feedback throughout the year.

As the bike lane pilot approached its one-year mark, the Committee conducted a final round of outreach to capture experiences from the first year and identify questions or conditions residents believed should be considered in any future discussion of the corridor.

The one-year mark represents the completion of this phase of community feedback; it does not determine what happens to the temporary infrastructure or what, if any, permanent changes may ultimately be considered for the corridor.

This document does not recommend a particular outcome for the existing pilot, a potential permanent project, or a possible connection farther along Virginia Avenue toward North Highland. It also does not attempt to resolve questions raised through the community feedback that require professional traffic, parking, safety, engineering, or other technical analysis.

Its purpose is to provide the VHCA Board, the City, neighbors, and other stakeholders with a shared record of the planning history, bike lane pilot, and community feedback gathered during its first year to help inform future consideration of the corridor.

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A Long-Planned Connection

The Virginia Avenue connection has roots in transportation and neighborhood planning stretching back well over a decade. Most notably, the 2014 Virginia-Highland Master Plan specifically recommended bicycle infrastructure on Virginia Avenue.

Since that Master Plan was developed, the geography and daily use of the neighborhood have continued to evolve. Virginia-Highland Elementary, which transitioned from Inman Middle in 2023, now sits directly on Virginia Avenue, bringing a significant number of school-aged children and families to the corridor each day, including many students who walk and bike to school. The school adds another important daily destination along a corridor that already connects residential streets, the North Highland business district, other neighborhood schools, and routes toward the BeltLine.

The bike lane pilot therefore provided an opportunity to experience a long-standing transportation planning idea in the context of how Virginia-Highland functions today.

The Virginia Ave corridor helps connect Virginia-Highland residents to:

- Virginia-Highland Elementary
- Midtown High School
- DT Howard Middle School
- North Highland business district
- Atlanta BeltLine

A Timeline

2008 | Connect Atlanta

The City adopted Connect Atlanta as its comprehensive transportation plan in 2008, establishing a citywide framework for a connected, multimodal transportation system.

2009–2024 | Atlanta BeltLine Planning

BeltLine planning for Subarea 6 plans and updates identified Virginia Avenue as part of the area's bicycle and pedestrian connectivity strategy, including connections involving Virginia Avenue.

2014 | Virginia-Highland Master Plan

After an extensive neighborhood planning process, the Virginia-Highland Master Plan recommended adding bicycle infrastructure along Virginia Avenue between Kanuga Street, Barnett Street, and North Highland Avenue.

2025–2026 | Tactical Urbanism Pilot

The VHCA and MNA created a Tactical Urbanism Plan to temporarily implement the long-planned Virginia Avenue bicycle connection, from Monroe to Virginia-Highland Elementary School at Park Drive/Ponce Place.

What is Tactical Urbanism?

Tactical Urbanism uses temporary, lower-cost materials to test ideas on actual streets, giving communities and the City an opportunity to see how a concept works, hear from the people who experience it, and identify opportunities and challenges before permanent infrastructure is considered.

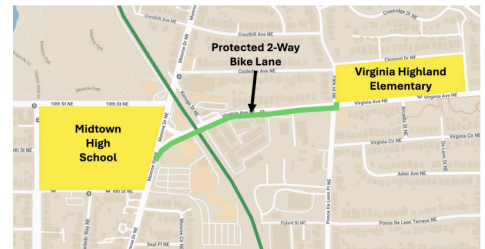
VHCA and MNA worked together through the City's Tactical Urbanism process to plan the temporary route, coordinate the installation, build awareness, recruit volunteers, and raise the money necessary to make the pilot possible. Together, the two neighborhoods raised \$11,597, with neighbors and supporters contributing both financially and through volunteer time. In September 2025, volunteers joined together to help install the pilot.

The Virginia Ave Bike Lane Pilot

Location: Virginia Avenue NE from Monroe Drive NE to Virginia-Highland Elementary

Partners: Virginia-Highland Civic Association and Midtown Neighbors' Association through the City of Atlanta Tactical Urbanism program

The pilot created a temporary two-way protected bicycle connection using painted markings, flexible delineator posts and buffers, and green markings at key access points. Within the pilot area, the bicycle lane crosses access points for Georgia Power, the Virginia-Highland Apartments, and Midtown Promenade/Trader Joe's; it does not cross individual residential driveways.



During the pilot year, the Safe Streets Committee gathered feedback about how the temporary configuration was experienced, including connectivity, bicycle safety and comfort, parking and street operations, access, design, and other location-specific conditions.

Limits of the Year-One Bike Lane Pilot

The bike lane pilot was installed along only a portion of the Virginia Avenue corridor. It used temporary materials and was not a permanent design. Community observations are qualitative and

are not accompanied by continuous professional bicycle, vehicle, or parking counts. Residents outside the installed segment could identify conditions that should be considered but could not report firsthand impacts of infrastructure that does not exist. These limitations are why this summary identifies questions for further evaluation rather than attempting to answer them.

Year-One Community Feedback

Three feedback stakeholder groups:

1. Virginia-Highland neighbors
2. Virginia-Highland businesses
3. Virginia-Highland students, families, and schools

The Safe Streets Committee sought feedback through:

- Public monthly VHCA board meetings
- VHCA Yearly Town Hall
- Direct conversations with Virginia-Highland residents
- Direct conversations with Virginia Avenue residents
- School and parent engagement
- Business stakeholder conversations
- Emails and direct correspondence
- Door-to-door outreach along Virginia Avenue
- Virginia Ave neighbor survey

The engagement was not designed as a referendum on whether a permanent project should proceed. The purpose was to document experiences with the pilot and identify conditions to consider in evaluating the corridor.

Stakeholder 1: Virginia-Highland Neighbors

Virginia-Highland neighbors are the primary stakeholders in the Tactical Urbanism project. Virginia Avenue residents represented an especially important subgroup because they live directly along the corridor and experience its day-to-day conditions.

Neighborhood Engagement

Throughout the bike lane pilot year, the Safe Streets Committee gathered feedback through direct emails, public meetings, conversations, stakeholder outreach and a survey. The themes below bring that feedback together around recurring issues and perspectives, noting differences in geography or stakeholder experience where relevant.

The feedback represents qualitative community experience, not quantitative evidence of traffic impacts, bicycle usage, parking demand, safety, or other measurable conditions.

As a volunteer community organization, VHCA did not conduct professional traffic, parking, engineering, or usage studies. Decisions about what additional data or technical analysis may be appropriate belong within the appropriate professional process.

The final outreach also asked residents what should be considered if bicycle infrastructure is evaluated farther along Virginia Avenue toward North Highland. Because no extension has been built and no permanent design was presented, that feedback identifies conditions and concerns for possible future consideration- not experienced impacts of the existing pilot.

A note on how we summarized feedback: *The Safe Streets Committee used AI-assisted analysis to help review survey responses and written feedback and identify recurring themes, differing perspectives and frequently raised concerns.*

Theme	Community Feedback	Issues and Questions for Future Consideration
Parking	Parking was the most consistently raised concern, particularly among Virginia Avenue residents. Residents described Virginia Avenue parking as serving many overlapping users: residents whose household parking needs extend beyond available driveways or alley access, apartment residents and their visitors, VHE families, Virginia-Highland Church congregants, Piedmont Park visitors, neighborhood business customers, and people attending neighborhood events. Some residents adjacent to the existing pilot described the loss of parking as a significant day-to-day impact and expressed concern about parking being displaced onto nearby streets. Residents farther along Virginia Avenue frequently identified parking as their primary concern about a possible extension, particularly around VHE, John Howell Park and the North Highland commercial district. Other respondents said they would accept reduced parking in exchange for safer bicycle and pedestrian space or suggested exploring configurations that retain some parking.	What does the City need to understand about potential parking displacement as it evaluates the corridor?
Bicycle Safety & Comfort	People who used the protected lane frequently described a meaningful change in how comfortable they felt traveling Virginia Avenue. Later survey responses continued this theme, with residents describing regular personal use, children using the lane, school trips, BeltLine access, and trips to neighborhood destinations. Some respondents specifically described the dedicated space and lane width as making bicycle travel feel safer or accommodating family and cargo-bike use. Others said they felt comfortable bicycling on Virginia Avenue before the pilot, questioned whether the lane improves safety, or described concerns at driveways and intersections. Several users who generally supported the lane also asked for stronger physical separation and safer transitions.	What material type and intersection treatments would provide appropriate protection for riders of different ages and abilities? Where are the highest potential conflict points among bicycles, vehicles and pedestrians?

Traffic Flow, Speed & Street Operations	Residents described different experiences with vehicles. Some reported queues and delays, particularly around intersections and when delivery or service vehicles stop in the travel lane. Later feedback specifically identified congestion near Ponce Place/Park Drive, where respondents said drivers previously used available curb space to move around vehicles waiting to turn. Others said they had not observed the pilot disrupting traffic or believed it had slowed vehicles. Concerns were also raised about emergency and service access (though parked vehicles similarly limited available clearance for emergency vehicles). Speeding was also identified as a broader Virginia Avenue concern independent of the bicycle lane.	Evaluate any location-specific operational changes associated with the pilot and turning near intersections, as well as access for delivery, sanitation and emergency vehicles.
Driveways, Property Access & Sight Lines	Driveway feedback differed depending on whether residents were describing the existing pilot or considering a potential extension. Along the installed pilot, the bicycle lane crosses a limited number of access points; the Virginia Highland Apartments, Georgia Power property, and Midtown Promenade/Trader Joe's. Feedback around the apartment entrance was mixed: some residents described concerns about seeing approaching bicycle traffic when exiting, while another resident reported that removing curbside parking improved visibility when leaving the complex. While the existing pilot does not cross individual residential driveways, some residents living across from the pilot described changes in parking and street configuration as affecting how they enter or leave their properties. Separately, residents farther along Virginia Avenue raised concerns about how a potential bike lane could possibly interact with residential driveways if bicycle infrastructure were ever considered there.	Study individual driveway crossings, sight distances, bicycle visibility, parking setbacks, and intersection geometry. Are different treatments appropriate at different properties or portions of Virginia Avenue?
Who Uses the Lane - and How Often?	Residents reported differing experiences and observations regarding use of the lane. Some said they rarely or never observed people using it and questioned whether its use justified changes to parking or the street. Others reported personally using the lane regularly-including daily or several times per week-and described children and families using it for school, recreation, BeltLine access and neighborhood trips. Some frequent users also reported seeing relatively few other people in the lane.	Responses reflect individual experiences and observations rather than measured bicycle counts. The community feedback cannot establish actual usage volumes or patterns. If usage is relevant to future decision-making, what professional data would be useful?
Schools & Student Travel	Virginia-Highland Elementary School (VHE) was one of the most frequently identified destinations among respondents who reported using the bicycle lane. Parents reported using the pilot to bicycle children to VHE. Broader feedback included students using the route to reach other neighborhood schools and the BeltLine. Residents living farther along Virginia Avenue, beyond the area of the current pilot, also raised concerns about arrival and dismissal queues, school-event parking, driveway access, and general congestion around VHE. These comments provide context about broader conditions along Virginia Avenue rather than direct experiences with the installed bicycle lane.	What should the City understand about student travel, crossings, arrival/dismissal, and parking as it evaluates the corridor?

Connectivity & the Limits of a Partial Pilot	The pilot's short length was repeatedly identified from different perspectives. Supporters frequently said the route would be more useful if it provided clearer connections toward North Highland, Monroe and the BeltLine. Several regular users specifically identified difficult or confusing transitions at the ends of the existing facility, including the connection at Monroe and the transition near Ponce Place/Park Drive. Other respondents questioned the need for an extension or said the existing street already accommodates bicycle travel adequately. Some also described the current segment as too short or disconnected to justify its impacts.	How does Virginia Avenue function within the larger transportation network? What destinations and existing bicycle facilities would a complete connection serve, and how should transitions at either end be addressed?
Temporary Design vs. Permanent Infrastructure	Feedback repeatedly showed that opinions about the pilot's temporary materials should not automatically be interpreted as opinions about every possible permanent design. Respondents—including some who supported the bike lane—raised concerns about damaged or missing flexible posts, aesthetics, and the level of physical separation from vehicles. Suggestions included stronger separation, clearer markings and improved transitions. Other respondents opposed the configuration regardless of materials.	If the project advances, what pavement, separation, markings, maintenance and intersection treatments are appropriate?
Pedestrians, Scooters & Shared Space	The pilot also revealed that Virginia Avenue is used by people traveling in ways that do not fit neatly into “car” or “bicycle” categories. Residents described runners, pedestrians, scooters and e-bikes using the bicycle lane, roadway and sidewalks in different ways. Some considered this additional use a benefit; others described uncertainty or conflicts, particularly when bicycles or scooters remained on sidewalks despite the presence of the lane.	How should a future corridor design account for bicycles, e-bikes, scooters, pedestrians and runners?
Business Access & North Highland Ave	Residents raised questions about whether potential, future changes to parking near North Highland could affect business access. Some respondents were specifically concerned that possibly reducing on-street parking on Virginia Ave could make it harder for customers to reach businesses in the commercial district. In their letter of support, the Virginia Highland District (representing 106 businesses), described bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as another form of customer access and a way to better connect the commercial district with the neighborhood.	If bicycle infrastructure is considered in the future farther along Virginia Avenue toward North Highland, seek input from VHD and individual businesses as potential options are explored.
Events & Flexible Street Use	Residents raised questions about major neighborhood events, particularly the Summerfest Artist Market, that create a different demand. These comments identify an important operational requirement: Virginia Avenue periodically functions differently during major neighborhood events than it does on an ordinary day. That use should be communicated to the City as part of any potential future design process so event access, temporary closures, and necessary flexibility can be considered from the beginning.	If permanent infrastructure is considered in the future, how could it accommodate major events, temporary street closures and the Artist Market?
Community Feedback Was Not Unanimous	The pilot bike lane produced support, opposition and substantial middle ground. Some respondents supported the existing pilot or bicycle infrastructure generally while raising concerns about parking, traffic, access, temporary materials or particular locations. Others supported the existing pilot but had different views about whether or how a future connection should continue farther along Virginia Avenue. Still others opposed the existing configuration or future bicycle infrastructure. The feedback does not fall neatly into “for” or “against” categories, nor was it intended to. The purpose of the community engagement was to identify and document recurring themes, experiences, concerns and differing perspectives.	How can the next City process give residents concrete design information and opportunities to consider alternatives and tradeoffs?

Stakeholder 2:

Virginia-Highland Businesses

Business District Connectivity

Virginia-Highland's businesses are an important neighborhood stakeholder in conversations about how our streets function and connect people to neighborhood destinations. This is particularly relevant on Virginia Avenue, which serves as a route toward the North Highland commercial district. Just as residents, schools, and families bring important perspectives about how the corridor functions, the business community brings a perspective on customer access, parking, pedestrian and bicycle connections, and the relationship between the commercial district and the surrounding neighborhood.

The Virginia Highland District (VHD), representing 106 businesses, has formally expressed organizational support for making the existing connection permanent and evaluating a connection toward North Highland. VHD has framed bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as another form of customer access, connecting the commercial district with surrounding homes, schools, parks and the BeltLine.

That perspective does not eliminate the concerns raised by residents, nor does VHD's organizational position necessarily represent every individual business. Rather, it adds another stakeholder perspective to the record: residents raised questions about parking, loading and access, while VHD has identified bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as a potential form of access to the district.

If a connection toward North Highland is considered in a future process, input from both VHD and individual businesses can help inform that discussion. *The VHD letter of support is included in the Planning and Project Resources section.*

Stakeholder 3: Virginia-Highland Students, Families, and Schools

Schools and Safe Routes

Virginia-Highland Elementary is directly on Virginia Avenue, making students and families an important stakeholder in conversations about the corridor. Virginia Avenue also connects to the BeltLine and routes used by students traveling to Midtown High and DT Howard Middle Schools.

APS transportation policy adds important context. APS generally does not assign bus transportation to elementary students within a one-mile walk zone or middle and high school students within a

1½-mile walk zone. For many Virginia-Highland Elementary School and Midtown High School students, walking, biking, and driving are therefore the primary ways students reach school.

What We Heard from School Families

School and family feedback was one source of strong support for the bike lane pilot.

Virginia-Highland Elementary School Principal Terry Harness submitted a letter supporting safer bicycle access, and parents and educators described walking or biking to school and using the protected space. Several parents said the pilot affected which trips they felt comfortable making with children, including families who reported using the route daily or several times a week. *Principal Harness' letter of support is included in the Planning and Project Resources section.*

Residents around VHE also identified concerns about arrival and dismissal traffic, event parking, pedestrian activity, property access, and vehicle queues. Together, the feedback reflects both the experiences of families using the corridor for school travel and the operational concerns of residents living near the school.

Looking Ahead

Midtown High School is expected to undergo major construction from March 2027 through August 2028, affecting 2 parking lots: teacher and student parking. For Virginia-Highland students, this is especially significant because students within the greater majority of the neighborhood's Midtown High attendance zone do not receive school bus service.

If school construction or future transportation planning affects travel patterns in the area, student walking and biking, school traffic, parking, and connections among neighborhood schools are additional conditions that may warrant consideration.

Completing the Year-One Record

The Virginia Avenue bike lane pilot has now been in place for approximately one year. This summary documents the community feedback gathered during that period, including community reported benefits, concerns, differing experiences, and location-specific conditions.

This document does not recommend a specific next step or presume an outcome for the bike lane pilot or the broader Virginia Avenue corridor. It is intended to provide a common record of the bike lane pilot and the community feedback gathered during its first year.

With the completion of this summary, VHCA has a shared community record that can help inform any future study or consideration of the Virginia Avenue corridor. As additional information becomes available, it can be considered alongside the experiences and perspectives documented here and provide a foundation for continued community conversation.

Resources

- [VHCA Tactical Urbanism Page](#)
- [Virginia-Highland Neighborhood Master Plan & Update](#)
- [Connect Atlanta Plan](#)
- [Cycle Atlanta / City Bicycle Planning](#)
- [Atlanta's Transportation Plan](#)
- [City of Atlanta Tactical Urbanism Program](#)
- [ATLDOT Strategy & Planning / Vision Zero ATLDOT Office of Strategy and Planning](#)

VIRGINIA HIGHLAND
DISTRICT

June 20th, 2026

To the Atlanta City Council, ATLDOT, and the Department of City Planning:

On behalf of the Virginia Highland District, I am writing to express our strong support for making the Virginia Avenue bike lane pilot permanent and for advancing the next phase of the connection extending west toward North Highland.

The Virginia Highland District supports 106 businesses along North Highland and is responsible for the beautification, placemaking, and safety efforts that keep our commercial corridor vibrant. We also produce five large annual events that draw substantial foot and vehicle traffic to the neighborhood. Safer bike and pedestrian infrastructure directly serves both our daily commercial life and these major gatherings, where reducing congestion and improving commuter safety would make a meaningful difference.

We see this project as far more than a bike lane. It is a question of business connectivity and access. Linking Virginia Avenue to the North Highland corridor gives residents and visitors another safe, practical way to reach our restaurants, retail, and services. It connects schools, neighborhoods, parks, businesses, and the BeltLine into a network that strengthens the entire district. And it makes our public space easier and safer to navigate for everyone moving through it, whether on foot, by bike, or by car.

This effort builds naturally on work we have already invested in. We partnered closely with the BeltLine to bring wayfinding signage to the neighborhood, and we believe a permanent, connected bike lane is the next most important step toward keeping Virginia Highland vibrant, safe, and bike-friendly.

We fully support making the current pilot permanent and continuing to evaluate its extension toward North Highland. We are grateful to the VHCA for initiating this work, and we are glad to lend our voice to it.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Dover Wheeler
Board President, Virginia Highland District

Lindsay Wheeler

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the recently added bike lane along Virginia Avenue, extending from Monroe Drive to Park Street, on behalf of Virginia-Highland Elementary School and our broader school community.

As principal of Virginia-Highland Elementary, I see firsthand the importance of creating safe, accessible, and walkable neighborhoods for children and families. Our school community is deeply connected to the surrounding neighborhood, with many students, parents, and staff members walking, biking, and utilizing alternative transportation methods to travel to and from school each day.

The addition of the bike lane represents an investment in public safety, health, and long-term community sustainability. Providing dedicated space for cyclists helps reduce conflicts between vehicles and bicyclists, encourages active transportation, and creates safer travel routes for families and students. In a neighborhood where pedestrian activity is high, these types of infrastructure improvements align with the values of a connected and family-centered community.

While I understand that the implementation of the bike lane has reduced some available street parking, particularly near nearby apartment residences, I believe the long-term benefits to safety and accessibility outweigh these challenges. Infrastructure decisions often require balancing competing needs, and in this case, prioritizing safer mobility options contributes positively to the overall well-being of the neighborhood.

Virginia-Highland Elementary values strong partnerships with our community and supports initiatives that promote safe routes, environmental responsibility, and healthy living. The bike lane is a meaningful step toward making our neighborhood safer and more accessible for all who live, work, and attend school here.

Thank you for your continued efforts to improve our community infrastructure and for considering the perspectives of local schools and families.

Sincerely,

Mr. Terry Harness
Principal

Achiever | Intellection | Strategic | Learner | Input