

FACT SHEET
Proposed Commonwealth Railway Trail in Western Branch
September 10, 2013

Project Scope:

- The abandoned Commonwealth and Seaboard rail lines provide an opportunity to develop a paved multi-use trail in Western Branch, which will add to the area's existing trail system.
- The first phase of the trail would extend from the Portsmouth City line to I-664 near Gum Road (Commonwealth Rail Line).
- The second phase of the trail would extend from I-664 to the Suffolk City line (Seaboard Rail line).
- With both phases of the trail, approximately 3.2 miles would be added to Western Branch's existing trail system.
- This trail would connect the existing off-street trails along Bruce and Tyre Neck Roads and create a "loop."
- Eventually, this proposed trail would be part of a regional project that follows the abandoned Commonwealth and Seaboard Railroad Line for approximately 44 miles, from the Suffolk train station to the Virginia Beach Oceanfront.

Project Details:

- The railroad right-of-ways are 50 feet in width; 10 feet of which would be a paved, asphalt trail.
- The trail would be used for biking and walking and would be off-road; motorized vehicles would not be permitted.
- The property would be maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Traffic bollards would be placed at the 6 at grade crossings of the trail to promote safety.
- Trail amenities could be provided in addition to required trail signage.
- No lighting or landscaping is proposed at this time.

Project Funding:

- Funding exists through the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Transportation Alternatives Program, a competitive grant program.
- The grant request amount is \$600,000 for the first phase of the project. The City is required to contribute 20% (\$120,000). The donation of the railroad right-of-way is expected to cover the City's required match.
- The deadline for application is November 1, 2013.