

ASHLEY RIVER CROSSING

Public Meeting Comments

Introduction

From April 14th to May 17th, the City of Charleston hosted an Online Public Meeting where over 300 total comments were received. Please find a brief executive summary as well as a more comprehensive report of those comments below.

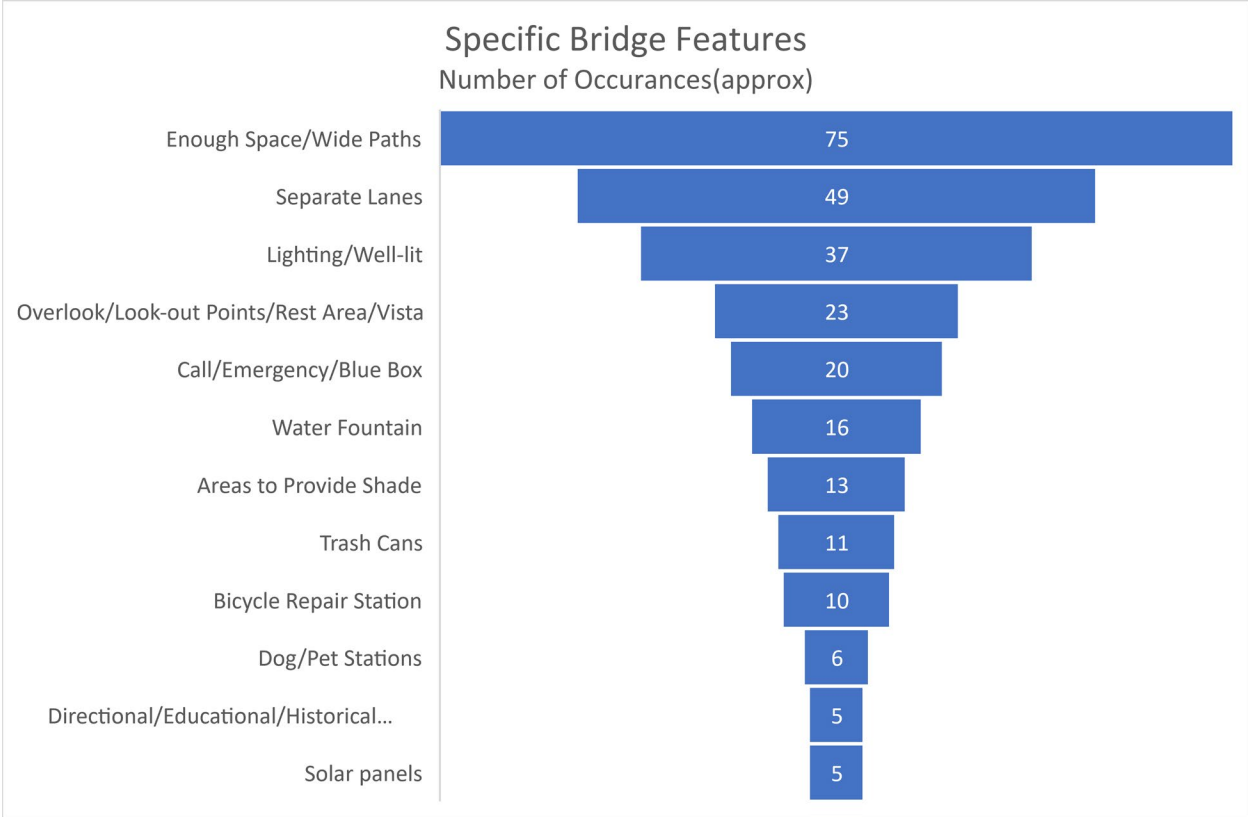


Executive Summary

SPECIFIC BRIDGE FEATURES

Overview

The majority of the comments in this section expressed concerns over space allotted for pedestrians and bicyclists. Having enough space for walkers and cyclists to safely coexist is of great importance. There are many requests for clearly defined lanes. Overlooks and other viewing areas are also a key theme.



Recurring Themes & Sample Quotes

Bike/Bicycle 196 Comments

"Bike friendly and make sure the pedestrian path is wide enough for 2 people to safely walk next to each other."

Pedestrian/Walker 151 Comments

"Build wide enough to accommodate heavy pedestrian and bike usage."

Safety 29 Comments

"Pedestrian and bike safety is paramount."

Separate Lanes 12 Comments

"Separate lanes for pedestrians and bikers."

Tax 14 Comments

"Yes, don't build it and reduce my taxes."

Art/Artist 4 Comments

"Places for murals, sculptures or other public art."

Waste (of money) 12 Comments

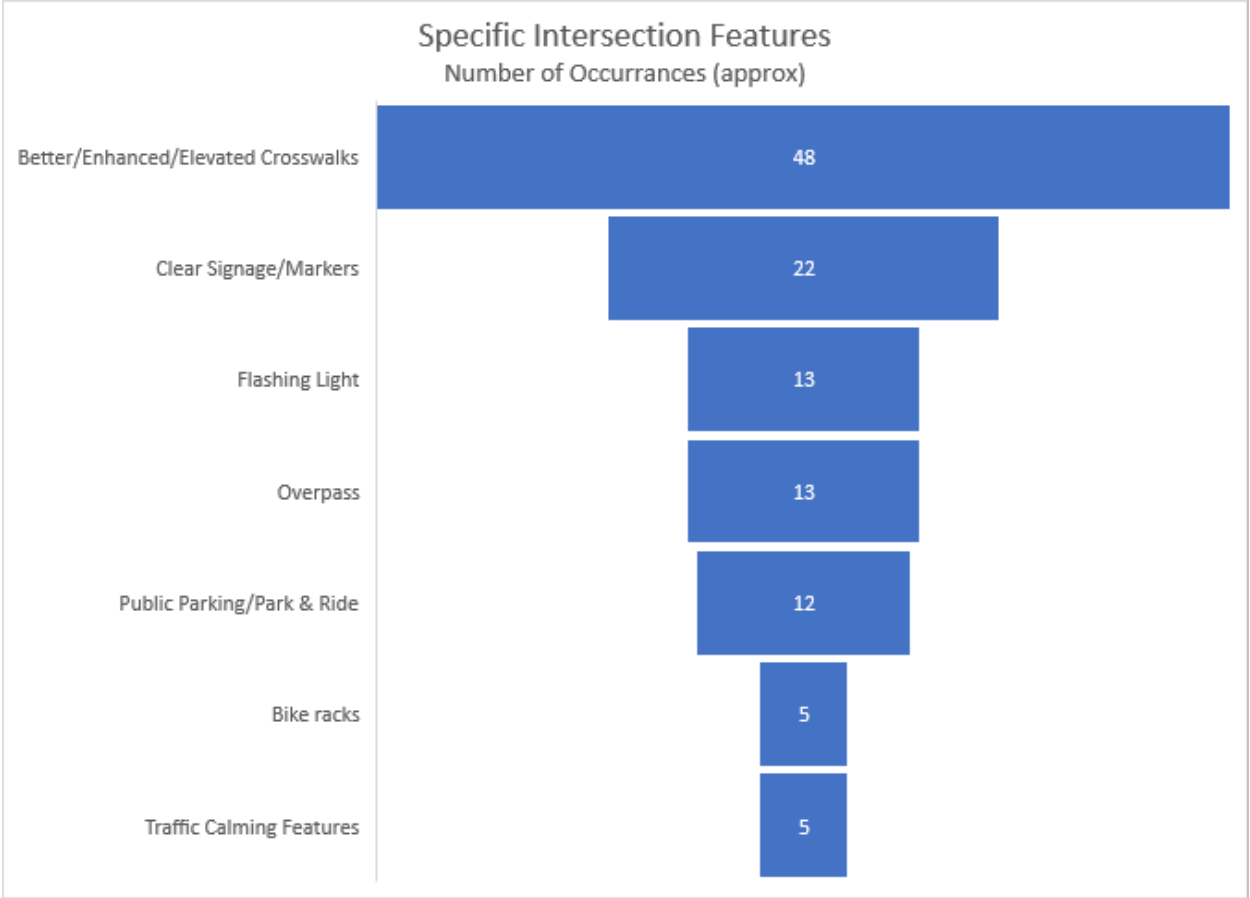
"Yeah, no bridge. What a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars."

Total Comments: 367

SPECIFIC INTERSECTION FEATURES

Overview

The majority of the comments in this section expressed concerns over traffic safety at the intersections within the project area. The intersections are very busy and dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. Measures should be taken to slow traffic for increased safety.



Recurring Themes & Sample Quotes

Greenway

111 Comments

“A direct connection to the greenway would be nice.”

Safety

28 Comments

“Anything to enhance safety - physical barriers if possible.”

Pedestrian

97 Comments

“Enhanced crossings for bikes and pedestrians at these intersections are vital.”

Overpass

17 Comments

“Consider a pedestrian overpass.”

Folly

89 Comments

“The Folly crossing needs to be as safe as possible. Possible a pedestrian activated switch to stop all intersections.”

Safely

9 Comments

“Clearly defined walk areas and a stop light coming off the off ramp at Bee and Lockwood so that pedestrians can cross safely. “

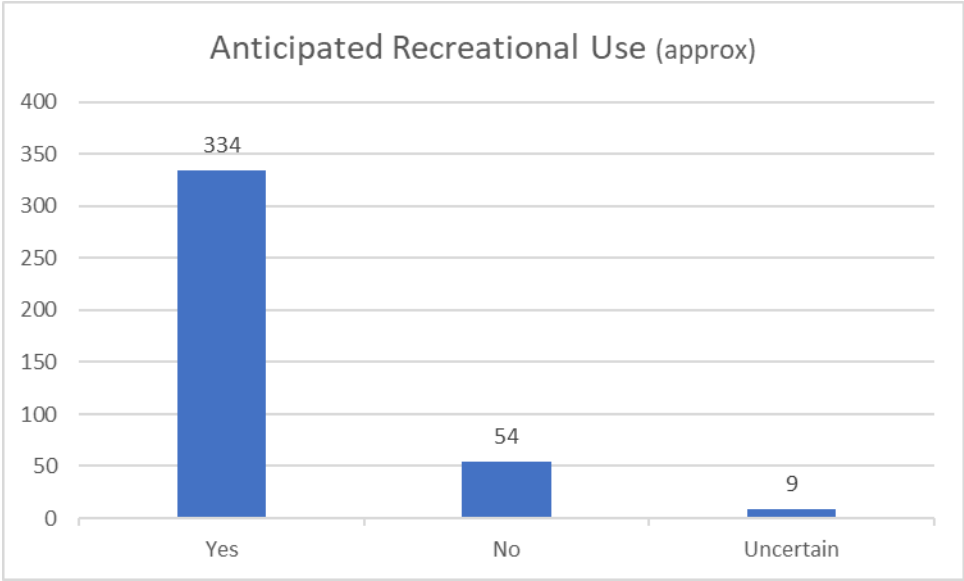
Wappoo

55 Comments

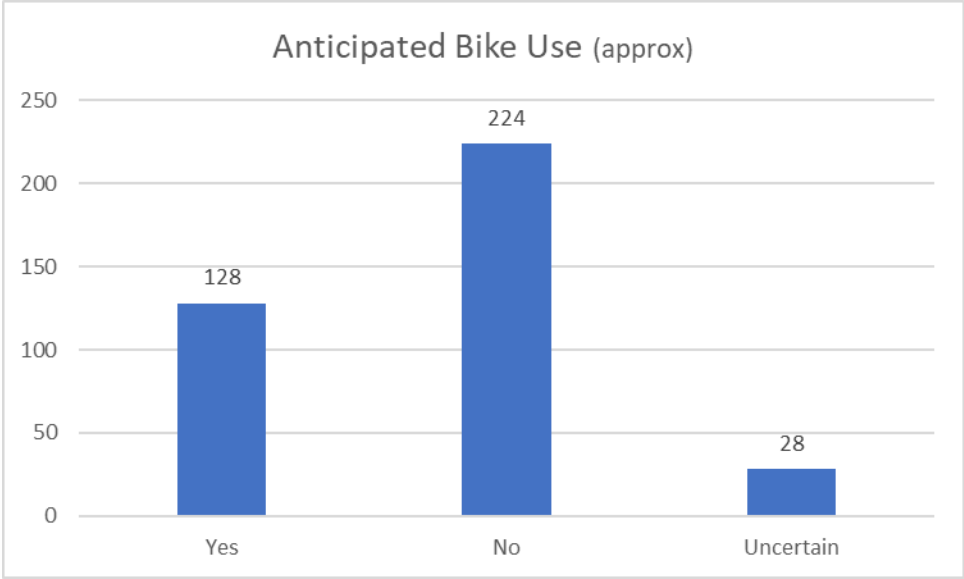
“Full stop required for automobiles at Wappoo. Most motorist are polite, but too many are not.”

Total Comments: 326

ANTICIPATED RECREATIONAL USE



ANTICIPATED BICYCLE USE FOR COMMUTING



Sample Comments – Specific Bridge Features

Space – Pedestrian/Bicyclist safety

- Make sure there is enough space for walkers and bicyclist to pass safely.
- Width - many paths around here are not wide enough to accommodate walkers and bikers.
- Separate Bike and Pedestrian lanes.
- Just plenty of room for cyclist and pedestrians to pass each other.
- Very wide so people can walk and bike and have plenty of room without running into each other.
- Provide sufficient space for pedestrians and cyclist to pass safely.
- Pedestrian and bike safety is paramount.
- Appropriate marking for bike and walking lanes.
- Marked lanes for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Designated spaces for pedestrians vs bikes, skaters.
- Clearly defined lane with ample room for pedestrians so we don't have to compete with fast bicyclists.
- Designated bike and pedestrian lanes on the bridge.
- Separate lanes for bikes and pedestrians.
- Significant space for bikers and walkers.
- Wide lanes specific for bicycling or walking/running.
- Clear delineation between bicyclists and pedestrians to avoid accidents from pedestrians strolling into bike path.
- Bike friendly and make sure the pedestrian path is wide enough for 2 people to safely walk next to each other.
- Directional biking lanes separate from the walking lanes, to give walkers and bikers separate spaces.
- It needs to be wide enough to allow space for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Ensure the bridge is wide enough to accommodate both slow, casual walkers along with faster cycling commuters.
- Bridge needs to be at least 30 feet wide, preferably 40, with pedestrian lanes on the outside and enough room in the bicycle lanes for faster riders to pass slower riders, and the same for pedestrians.
- Include pavement markings to suggest that bikes should stay on a separate path from pedestrians.
- I think the biker lane should be wide enough for those that carry their children in trailers behind their bikes.
- It would be good to have the pedestrian lane and the bike lane separated by some type of barrier.
- One or two wide open areas where pedestrians and bikers might stop to take in the view while not obstructing the path for those walking/riding.
- Have a divider (even if its narrow posts, etc.) on the new bridge for walking lanes & biking lanes.
- the bridge be wide enough for at least two bikes to pass each other with more than a few inches of room.
- The bridge should be wide enough for bikes and the electric transportation modes of the future, i.e., electric bikes or scooters.
- Perhaps a small, motorized vehicle lane (golf carts, motor scooters, etc.).

Overlooks/Rest Areas/Seating

- An area over the water where pedestrians can stop and sit down.
- Two to three spaces for public overlooks that are out of the "flow of traffic" on the bridge.
- Look out points to allow for people to stop and take in the view of the river.
- Vista areas for sitting along the way.
- A wider spot in the middle to overlook the water would be nice.
- Observation/lookout point where one could safely stop, rest, and enjoy the view over the water.
- Stopping areas for pedestrians and cyclists.
- There needs to be many cantilevered out platforms placed outside the travel lanes where users can stop to admire the view and/or sit on benches.
- Some pull out areas where you assume people will stop for pictures or to take in the view.
- There needs to be two to three spaces for public overlooks that are out of the "flow of traffic" on the bridge.
- Enough space to pause and rest or enjoy the view without feeling like you'll be run over.
- Space to stop and look at the river/city without feeling like you are in the way of pedestrians and bicyclists using the bridge.
- Perhaps an observation deck.
- A safe place to stop to take a break, take pictures or just visit.
- Some balconies on the side to allow for scenic overlooks of the river and peninsula/West Ashley.

Accessibility and Connectivity

- Accessible connection to St. Andrews Boulevard.
- Special attention should be given to how the bridge is accessed from West Ashley and Downtown, including the amenities connecting to and from.
- I would love to see a connection to the existing West Ashley Greenway and incorporate a way to easily cross large + busy intersections (Folly Road, Hwy 17, etc.).
- Easy and safe ways to get on and off the bridge.
- I believe the pedestrian bridge should have a split /spur away from Highway 17 at the area of the Holiday Inn, cutting across the marsh connecting to the Ashley greenway.
- Allow for golf cart access to downtown from West Ash neighborhoods.
- How can we connect this to the lowline to have a true walking/running/biking path throughout downtown?
- I'd like it to fully connect without any interruption to the Greenway.
- It would be great to have a more direct connection for folks coming in from or headed towards Highway 61 so that they don't have to go down Wesley or 17n to Albemarle.
- A safe connection to and from Saint Andrews Blvd.
- Easy access from Folly Road and greenway.
- A foot bridge over Folly Rd connecting the greenway is essential.

Dogs

- Add pet clean-up stations.
- Ample space for dogs to walk alongside pedestrians.
- Dogs are to be permitted.
- Dog safe railing to prevent squeezing through.
- Enough room to bike or walk dogs, please.
- Trash cans, recycling cans, dog waste bag stations.

Emergency call boxes

- Well-lit emergency stations.
- Safety lights - blue call lights in case of emergency.
- Install emergency communication stations along the bridge.
- Police call box of some kind in the middle of the bridge would be good.
- Emergency call boxes.
- Well lit, emergency police call boxes.
- Emergency buttons.

Bicycle maintenance station

- Add bicycle maintenance station with free air pumps.
- Public bike repair stations that have bike pump, Allen wrenches, etc.
- Tool areas / pumps / water fountains.
- Bicycle hubs for renting bikes.

Water fountains

- Easily refill water bottles.
- Public water fountains and sheltered seating to get out of a storm in these areas would also be useful.
- Water fountain and maybe even a public restroom would be nice.
- Water fountains at each end of bridge for humans and pets.

Wheelchairs

- I believe the bridge will be highly used so ensuring the bridge is wide enough for multiple modes (i.e., biking, walking, wheelchairs).
- Allow for wheelchairs and strollers if possible.
- It should be wide enough to accommodate slow electric vehicles that cannot be driven on the other crossings such as golf carts and motor-assist bicycles and wheelchairs.

Benches/Sheltered Seating

- Put benches on the bridge for resting and seniors.
- Benches, water-bottle spigots, greenery.

Lighting

- Lights for nighttime and foggy days.
- Ensure adequate lighting for night operation.
- Lighting adequate for cycling over at night.
- Lighting for nighttime.
- Pedestrian-level lighting
- Lights, emergency call boxes, and surveillance cameras.
- Well-lit at night.
- Solar lighting.

Parking

- Some kind of parking lot on either side of the bridge would be useful for those who want to come for a visit.
- Possible parking area on West Ashley side of bridge.
- Think about where people will be able to park their cars to take advantage of a walk/ride.

Ashley Marina

- It is going to greatly impact the navigable waters around the Ashley Marina. Tax payers own those slips; I am one of them. Large yachts will not be able to navigate around the corner closest to the shore once this bridge is constructed.
- Minimize obstructions to river flow. Marinas on the east side of the Ashley are silting in.
- I own a slip for a large sailboat docked at the end of the marina next to the proposed site for this bridge. I own the slip. I pay taxes on this slip. This bridge will greatly impact the turn basin I need to dock this sailboat. The construction of this bridge will render my slip unusable for the duration of the construction. Once completed, I will not have enough room to safely navigate and turn this large, heavy sailboat around.
- I like the idea of this bridge, however, I don't think there was enough consideration given to the Ashley Marina and the boat slips that will be closest to the new crossing.

Statements Opposing the Bridge

- Not building it would be a great feature.
- Don't construct the bridge.
- We don't need another bridge across the Ashley River, and we don't need to spend money we don't have or that could be spent on necessary city responsibilities or not spent at all and reduce our city taxes.
- Yeah, no bridge. What a colossal waste of taxpayer dollars.
- I would like it not to be built.
- It is an unnecessary spending of tax dollars when our roads, especially Johns Island and I-26 are in such disrepair that it is dangerous and totally unacceptable. What a waste of taxpayer money!
- I think this is an unnecessary project that will appease those bike riders that have the means to go anywhere they want to go via any available transportation.
- This project is a huge waste of money.
- I'm disappointed that the plan isn't being incorporated into better bridges from West Ashley to downtown.
- What is the budget and how will the city pay for it?
- This is a place where the winters get cold. It is a waste of money. The south is not known for walkers, especially in the winter.
- I think this is beyond stupid!!!!
- Those draw bridges are obsolete, restrict traffic and vessel flow.
- Bike bridge is Bandid and a waste of money.
- No. Waste of money.
- I do not want the bridge to be built...NOT NEEDED...rarely see a bike on the bridge...waste of MY TAX DOLLARS.
- FEEL WASTE OF MY TAX DOLLARS...NEVER SEE ANYONE WALKING OR BIKING ON IT.
- This bridge is not practical and would serve only a few people.

Other

- Educational markers.
- Architecture features that will make it beautiful to use.
- Distance markers to historical locations downtown.
- Architectural detail that will stand out and become timeless in the years to come - like Charleston itself.
- I want the bridge to remain relatively flat with a moveable section in the middle.

- Not too steep.
- I think it's a great opportunity to put an iconic structure across the Ashley River.
- Design should be the result of an open design submission platform (geared towards but not exclusive to SC student architects) rather than yet another paid consultant study which inevitably results in high fees and low inspiration for Charleston West of the Ashley.
- Permaculture to allow for low maintenance costs.
- Some kind of screen or protection for litter coming off the bridge for river/marsh area.
- Digital bike/ped counters are awesome.
- Places for murals, sculptures or other public art.
- Public educational elements about sea level rise, climate change, greenhouse gasses, biology, ecology, hydrology etc.
- Aesthetically pleasing.
- Only that it's consistent with the historic integrity of the original bridge.
- Project would be visually enhanced by aesthetics and landscape elements where appropriate.
- Wide enough to anticipate growth over the years.
- Fishing bump outs, plants, benches, map of West Ashley on West Ashley side and map of peninsula on peninsula side.
- Solar canopy; microturbines, Wi-Fi-enabled lighting, mobility hubs at the anchor ends of the bridge.
- The bridge should be built where the old train trestle crossed the Ashley River. That way when I get off the bridge on the peninsula, I would not be right in the flow of major rush traffic coming into or leaving downtown.
- It'd be nice to have a solid barrier separating pedestrians from cyclist to make it appealing for commuters.
- In summer sun blocking coverage of riders and walkers.
- Solar panels where available, art installations from local artists, doggie bags.
- The towers are inelegant, stodgy, and ugly.
- Good barricades, caution lights, railing.
- The bridge should be a draw bridge so that there is no limit to the height of a vessel that needs to pass through.
- Informational signage along the bridge – highlighting the history and impact of underrepresented groups who have made Charleston what it is today.
- The pedestrian bridge should blend in more with the other 2 bridges to give it a historical appearance.

Sample Comments – Specific Intersection Features

Greenway

- The greenway could definitely benefit from appropriate light all along the way.
- A direct connection to the greenway would be nice.
- Get rid of the glaring caution lights and signs at the Greenway intersections. We aren't children at the school bus stop. We know how to cross a street.
- Remove the hot, black, hard asphalt, and return the Greenway to a natural cool, soft path.

- Seamless route on the Greenway from Main Road to Lockwood Drive. Double the width of sidewalks on Hwy 61, Old Town Rd, & Sam Rittenburg to the North Bridge area. to take bikes off the street.
- Protected bike lanes along St. Andrews Blvd to facilitate moving between Bikeway and Greenway/bridge.

Folly Rd.

- I'd like to see a more intuitive/better marked crossing at Folly Rd.
- As for the Folly Road West Ashley an appropriate plan is needed to connect in the most comfortable way and according to the desire lines to the various destinations, to the Folly bike way.
- The crossing over Folly Road should be elevated.
- There is absolutely no good way to cross Folly Road from the Green way.
- The intersection at Folly Road and West Ashley Greenway is already difficult for cars due to the Y shape and also the large amount of cars turning into the shopping center. A 4-way pedestrian/bike crossing may be useful and safer, like is done in larger cities, when all the stoplights are red at the same time and pedestrians can cross in any direction.
- The Folly crossing needs to be as safe as possible. Possibly a pedestrian activated switch to stop all intersections.
- At Folly perhaps route the Greenway traffic to the traffic light at Folly Rd. at S. Windermere Shopping Center?
- Safe crossing (or even an overpass) at Folly road.
- Folly Road is extremely important. It is by far the busiest Greenway intersection. Right now, the crossing is not ideal, having to negotiate crossing over both Windermere Blvd and Folly Road. Ideally there would be an elevated crossing in line with the Greenway straight across Folly.
- The Folly Road / West Ashley Greenway is particularly dangerous in spite of having a crosswalk. This needs to be a grade separated crossing, i.e., either a pedestrian / bicycle overpass or tunnel.
- Folly Rd: OVERPASS!! This area is a MESS with no safe way to get across. If that's not possible, an opportunity to push the walk light and for ALL cars to have red light for PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ONLY.
- Folly: direct crosswalk with ease of use for bicycles/bike lane to the bridge
- Folly Road crossing to Greenway needs better walk signs coordinated with lights.
- Speed limit must be decreased on Folly Road for you are mixing more pedestrians and people routinely drive 10-20 mph over the speed limit.
- Foot bridge over Folly rd.
- Greenway flyover across Folly.
- Folly Road & West Ashley Greenway - signal controlled crossing that is coordinated with adjacent signals, so greenway users can cross safely and also won't constantly interrupt traffic flow .
- Need a sidewalk on north bridge.
- Flashing lights.
- There absolutely has to be a better solution for crossing Folly Rd. at the Greenway. A while ago a bike/ped overpass was proposed and rejected. The Ashley River bike ped bridge changes the game! The number of people crossing Folly on bike will be much larger when the bridge is constructed. It is time to build a bike/ped overpass, or at the

least a direct crossing at the Greenway, with full red lights for traffic coming in both directions.

- Currently on the West Ashley Greenway it is difficult to cross Folly Road and then there is no way to cross the James Island Connector and get to the Ashley River.

Wappoo Rd.

- On Wappoo lots of people run that red light. There needs to be more of a delay in allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to cross. Also, I think a traffic camera that can ticket people running reds would do wonders and make it feel safer. There could also be a better indicator of where the Bike Way is. Right now, it looks sketchy and like you are trespassing when you get on it.
- Traffic calming (such as a landscaped median and a better marked crossing) on Wappoo.
- Wappoo area is very busy... raised crossing at entry and flashing light perhaps?
- Better crosswalks, the crosswalk light with the alarm that gives 30 seconds before the light turns (at Folly Road) and the crosswalk sign that lights up at Wappoo, bathrooms and water fountains and emergency phone.
- Wappoo Road and WA Greenway needs more police presence.
- Raised crosswalks at Wappoo Rd.
- The bikeway near the intersection of Wappoo Road narrows too much for cycling and pedestrians.
- We'd love to be able to utilize the bikeway better, as well with safer crossings at Wappoo and 61.
- Wappoo Road could use a monster speed bump just before the crossing to demand people slow down.
- The stop signs should be on the road at Wappoo and not on the Greenway.
- Vehicular traffic on Wappoo should be required to yield to pedestrians/cyclists.
- Grand wide walking and biking at the west Ashley greenway Folly and Wappoo intersection to allow people to get from the bridge down Folly to the Wappoo bridge
- A blinking light and more defined crosswalk at the greenway/Wappoo Road intersection.
- Full stop required for automobiles at Wappoo. Most motorists are polite, but too many are not.
- I utilize the Wappoo Rd. crossing almost daily as both a motorist and a pedestrian. Clearing some of the vegetation on the eastern side of Wappoo will immensely improve visibility of Greenway users to drivers. When driving on Wappoo towards 17, Greenway users aren't visible unless they're right on the edge of the road.
- Regarding the Wappoo crossing a raised crosswalk could help to increase visibility and decrease speed.
- Wappoo Road and WA Greenway needs more police presence.
- The bikeway near the intersection of Wappoo Road narrows too much for cycling and pedestrians. The bikeway empties out too close to the intersection.
- Wappoo Road: flashing light at Greenway, brighter markings
- Wappoo- SAFE CONNECTION to WA BIKEWAY! This is huge and I know is already planned but its importance can't be understated.
- The inclusion of high visibility markings and signage will be a great addition at the Wappoo Rd./WA Greenway intersection.
- Wappoo: raised crosswalk speed bump like on Parkdale rd.
- A speed bump at Wappoo Rd & West Ashley greenway is desperately needed. I saw a biker get hit a few months ago by a car that didn't slow down at the intersection. I ride

the full length of the greenway often and the cars on Wappoo never yield to runners or bikers or walkers.

Lockwood Rd.

- Some way to keep cyclists and pedestrians visible and safe when turning left onto Lockwood.
- Connecting to the sidewalk at Lockwood and also to the West Ashley Greenway would be ideal so that people in neighborhoods could hop on without having to bring their cars and try to find parking.
- The intersection at Bee St and Lockwood Drive would benefit from a raised, brightly painted crossing.
- A cycle lane on Bee Street between Lockwood and Rutledge would be welcome.
- Bee St/Lockwood is an intimidating intersection so anything that makes it feel safer for pedestrians is great.
- For Bee street and Lockwood - make sure cyclists can easily go from bridge to Lockwood drive in both directions (safely get to both Brittlebank/Citadel as well as Colonial Lake/Battery). Make sure medical district easily connects.
- The Lockwood sidewalk needs to be widened from the marina to Bee Street.
- Bee Street & Lockwood - coordinated signal crossings in each direction so greenway users feel safe. An oversized landing area (or small park with a city map, fountain, water bottle filler, etc.) so greenway users can make a choice on which way to go next without feeling pressured to move.

Wesley Dr./St. Andrews Blvd.

- I suggest that the crosswalk at Wesley Drive and St. Andrew's Boulevard be enhanced and a new bike/ped lane be added between the In and Out Car Wash, over the Fielding Connector, down Croghan Spur, down Albemarle Road to Folly Road to connect to the new bridge.
- Would also love to see some sort of barricade between the sidewalk and Wesley Rd in the stretch between Sav Hwy and Windermere Blvd. So many families in Old Windermere want to walk safely up to the shopping center without fear of a car flying down the road and hitting the curb.

Moreland Neighborhood

- Moreland neighborhood/Highway 61 needs an easy connection to the new bridge or the Greenway. It is much too difficult to cross 61, Wesley Dr, to get to Greenway from the Ashley River side of 61. We need low traffic access.

Parking

- A place to park would be nice.
- More public parking options for the Greenway.
- It would be great if people would commute by bike from their homes to downtown, but for those who are not comfortable with that, especially due to the Wappoo Bridge, I wonder if a commuter parking lot near Folly Rd & the West Ashley Greenway would encourage people to park there and bike downtown? It would free up congestion and parking downtown, especially if MUSC bought into it.

Pedestrian and Bike Crossing

- Enhanced crossings for bikes and pedestrians at these intersections are vital. These crossings need to be at places along these roads that do not require a detour like the bike way crossing at 61.

Comments Opposing the Effort

- I think ultimately it will be an eyesore. If it was added to an existing bridge or wait until one of the Ashley River bridges needed replacing or go ahead and replace a bridge that would ultimately be better than an unsightly standalone structure.
- No let's fix stop lights and roadways and stop wasting money on pet projects.
- I'd like improved schools in that corridor, not a bike path.
- Don't spend the money!

Other/General

- A light rail
- All 3 intersections are currently disasters, if we could have an actual bike stop light that like they do in Seattle that would make it much more safe.
- Misting stations for hot days. Solar panel recharge stations for phones. Water refill stations. Shade benches made from recycled plastics.
- Continuance of bike/walking paths on both sides. Bikes need safe paths to ride.
- Continued advertisements of the bike system as a holistic design. I love the concept of beach to battleship and hope that continues to be communicated even if completion takes many small projects.
- Generally, a separation of space between cars, bikes, and pedestrians. At the very least dedicated spaces for cars vs. bikes/pedestrians.
- Need many more signs and crossing warnings.
- Lower speeds for automobile traffic and highly visible signs/lights designating the crossings.
- A rapid bus system with a isolated lane. or Build a standing shuttle.
- If possible, I would love for the pedestrian underpass underneath the James Island connector to be improved. It is so narrow that it's almost impossible for opposing directions of travel to take place.
- A pedestrian bridge connecting the greenway over Folly Road or somewhere safer to cross. Also, signage for walkers/bikers/runners leading them to a safe place to cross.
- The wooden posts placed at the street entry points of the greenway are way too close together - they are an injury risk for bikers that cross the streets at these points b/c the space is so narrow to get through. It is an injury risk and liability to the city.
- I think my family would be more likely to use the bridge if there are safer paths from our area (Orange Grove) to reach it. Also, the peninsula needs to be safer to bike around as well. A park and ride from a bike hub would be nice to reach upper king from the bridge. There needs to be lots of safe bike parking throughout the city.
- Please, please, please do not disrupt traffic flow at these incredibly busy intersections - especially at rush hour. Overhead walkways would be ideal.
- Buried power lines, better streetscapes, better/safer crosswalks.
- Decades ago, to commemorate the revitalization of downtown and construction of the Omni, bricks were inserted on part of King Street bearing the names of individuals who contributed money for the honor of being a part of history. Perhaps something similar could be utilized on selected streets.
- Public art and sculptures, pull off areas for sitting, stretching. Light 2-wheel motorized vehicles (electric scooters, electric).

- Bicycles, e
- The features that are needed at all of these places are methods that will make crossing traffic safer. Drivers in Charleston are intolerant of bicyclists. Regretfully the police surveillance of Savannah highway is minimal and at least two cars drive through every red light. It is very dangerous for drivers as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. These intersections all need safety improvements.
- Full stop all directions to permit walkers and bike riders walking their bikes to cross in any direction.
- Currently, even though I press the change light/activate crosswalk signal, I have to wait up to 3 minutes for it to change. I request that a press of the crosswalk signal button immediately shifts the traffic to stop instead of making pedestrians and cyclists wait in the hot sun/cold weather with motor vehicles roaring by.