Let's Go RVA:
Advancing Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Through Mapping and Education in Richmond, Virginia

Richmond, Virginia, a historic and dynamic city, is working to enhance safety and accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians. Despite ongoing efforts to improve infrastructure, challenges persist, particularly in ensuring that all road users—bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers—are well-informed about safety practices and infrastructure updates. Bike Walk RVA, a program within Sports Backers, has been at the forefront of advocacy for improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, championing access to safe streets for all. Recognizing the urgent need for enhanced public awareness, the organization launched an initiative to create and distribute an educational bike and pedestrian safety map. Supported by the Virginia Walkability Action Institute (VWAI), this effort aimed to empower residents with essential knowledge on bike laws, safety measures, and infrastructure resources, reducing preventable injuries and fatalities while fostering a more bike-friendly and walkable Richmond.

Team:

The project was led by Bike Walk RVA, a program within Sports Backers with projects aimed at making it more comfortable and convenient for people of all ages and abilities to bike and walk around the state. The VWAI work included key contributions from Emily Monroe, formerly the Community Engagement Coordinator, and Brantley Tyndall, the Director of Bike Walk RVA.

Goals and Vision:

- Work to improve safety and reduce fatalities among vulnerable road users in Richmond, Virginia, and beyond
- Create a distributed educational tool that informs vulnerable road users and drivers about bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, safety, plans, policies, and laws
- Improve access to bike and pedestrian resources by providing a printed map

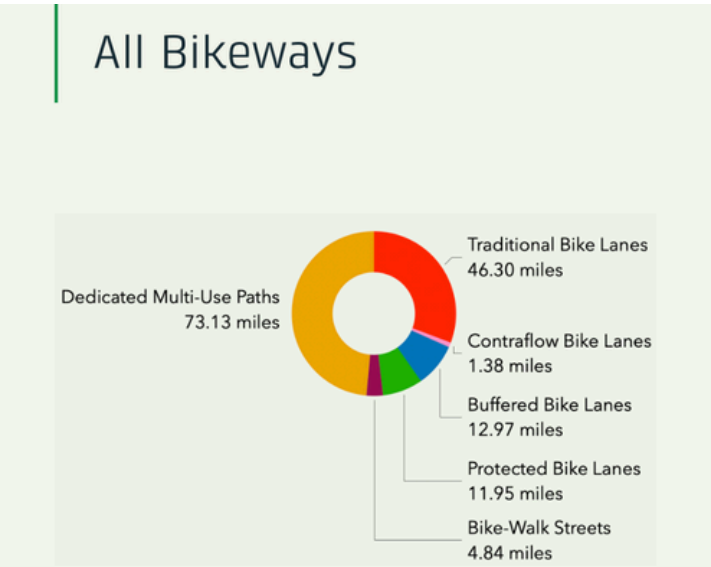
Background:

Bike Walk RVA is an initiative that offers bike and pedestrian safety resources that help individuals, communities, and planners create safer environments for walking and cycling. From 2021 to 2022, the state of Virginia saw a 34% increase in pedestrian fatalities, many of which were attributed to drivers' lack of awareness of bicycle laws and infrastructure. This is often a result of bike and pedestrian safety information being inaccessible, making it difficult for people to stay up to date and informed on laws and regulations relating to bikes and pedestrians. In response, Bike Walk RVA developed a map to improve awareness and education on bike and pedestrian safety ("RVA Bikeways Map"). The initiative secured $5,000 of funding from the VWAI to design, print, and distribute 2,000 maps to local businesses and community partners, enhancing public access to safety information.

A screenshot of the bike lane examples demonstrated in the Bikeways Map. Source: Bike Walk RVA

Outcomes and Impact:

- Strengthened collaboration between Bike Walk RVA, regional administrators across seven localities, and other local leaders
- Created a physical and digital bike map that incorporates ideas distilled from public engagement charrettes and is easily updatable
- Developed plans to distribute the map to local partners, community centers, at public engagement events, and as part of a giveaway at a Bike Month event



The distribution of Richmond's bikeways. Source: Bike Walk RVA

Sources:

"RVA Bikeways Map" (2021). ArcGIS StoryMaps. https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c788f19add7f4a34928d186260e046a0