MEMORANDUM

To: Steering Committee Meeting Attendees

From: Brian McPeters, Kimley-Horn

Date/Time: June 28, 2018 | 5:30pm to 7:30pm

Subject: E. High Streetscape Project
VDOT Project #U000-104-298/ UPC #109480
Steering Committee Meeting #2 Summary

PURPOSE

At the second Steering Committee meeting, members discussed the results of public engagement including the Streetscape Summit and MetroQuest, reviewed and evaluated schematic design alternatives, and discussed recommendations for design going forward in preparation for the Public Open House on August 15, 2018.

1. Discussed public priorities for the project
2. Evaluated schematic design alternatives using public priorities

Agenda

5:30 to 5:40	*Presentation*	**Project Review & Introductions**
5:40 to 6:00	*Presentation*	**Summary of Public Engagement Results to Date** • Streetscape Summit • MetroQuest Survey
6:00 to 6:20	*Discussion*	**Steering Committee Discussion of Engagement Results**
6:20 to 7:00	*Facilitated Activity*	**Schematic Design Alternatives Review & Discussion** • Review of Pedestrian Facilities • Review of Bicycle Facilities • Review of Vehicular Facilities
7:00 to 7:15	*Facilitated Activity*	**Review Recommendations & Evaluation of Each Alternative**
7:15 to 7:30	*Public Comment*	

Summary

This was the second Steering Committee meeting between representatives from Kimley-Horn, the City of Charlottesville, and various neighborhood association and commission representatives for the East High Streetscape Project. Below is a brief description of the items discussed.

Project Review

Project Overview

- This project is a smart-scale project with a $5.6 million budget. The budget does not include the cost associated with possible conversion of overhead utilities (power and telecommunication) to underground. It was noted that the differential cost between overhead to overhead relocation and overhead to underground would be considered a betterment and be paid for by the City solely. The project was funded through the Smart Scale process, which is a state mandated scoring process that assists VDOT in development of projects for funding and delivery. The Smart Scale process places strict controls on the project budget and schedule, which should be considered as fixed.
- This project is a continuation of the Belmont Bridge Replacement project and directly connects to the Belmont Bride Replacement project at the intersection of 9th Street and E. Market Street.
- The website for this project is available at https://www.easthighstreetscape.org

Summary of Public Engagement Results

Steering Committee Meeting #1

- The participants in the first Steering Committee meeting ranked the importance of design elements, placing the highest priority on pedestrian facilities, followed by landscaping, bicycle facilities, signage & wayfinding, and traffic & travel speeds.
- Participants emphasized distinguishing the corridor as a welcoming threshold to the downtown area.

Streetscape Summit

- Participants in the Streetscape Summit completed stationed activities to provide their input. Design considerations received the same rankings found in the first Steering Committee meeting, with pedestrian facilities, landscaping, and bicycle facilities ranked highest.
- Using a map to mark out strong places and weak places along the corridor, citizens identified the intersection of Lexington Ave. and E. High St. as an area of concern.
- Participants used one word to capture their goals for the project, emphasizing the need for a welcoming, safe, and pedestrian friendly corridor.

MetroQuest Survey

- 530 participants engaged with the MetroQuest survey to provide over 13,000 individual data points and nearly 400 written comments. The survey was advertised by the city, through emails to neighborhood associations, mailers to low income residences, and attendance at neighborhood picnics.
- Respondents prioritized the movement of people over ancillary considerations. Design requests focused on buffering bicyclists and pedestrians from traffic.

Discussion of Public Engagement Results

- Committee members discussed methods used to advertise the survey to reach people of all demographics. The City noted that they had sent mailers to a large portion of the adjacent zip codes and reached out to community centers such as churches to advertise the survey. The Committee requested that demographic results from the survey be shared with the Committee.
- Results from the first Steering Committee meeting, Streetscape Summit and MetroQuest aligned to highlight pedestrian facilities, landscaping, and bicycle facilities as top priorities for design consideration.
- Public transit accessibility was emphasized by a concentrated group of participants, many participants though improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and traffic flow would also improve transit accessibility.
- Committee members discussed noise as a design consideration that might receive priority. Kimley-Horn explained how noise is assessed as part of the environmental impact report. Committee members discussed trees and vegetation as buffers to the noise, and possibility of engineered pavement that muffles the sound of traffic. However, it was noted that the corridor being mostly businesses and not residences, it was unlikely that adjacent properties would desire noise reduction as the loss of visibility of the business to the street.
- The upcoming Public Open House and the public approval process will provide further opportunity for public engagement.

Schematic Design Alternatives Review

Kimley-Horn presented a review of three schematic design alternatives. Each of the alternatives was designed under the assumption that utility conflicts will be addressed following discussions with Dominion Energy and the City of Charlottesville. Each alternative seeks to maximize the available right of way to address priorities identified in public engagement results. Each alternative reduces 9th Street between E. Market Street and E. High Street to three lanes with one travel lane northbound and southbound and a center lane for left turns. Each alternative removes the dedicated right-turn lane at the corner of the Carlton Oaks development and converts the remaining lane to a shared right/through lane, creating an area of public space. Each alternative reorients Lexington Ave. to intersect perpendicularly with E. High St. Each alternative shortens the crosswalk across E. High St. on the west side of the intersection with 10th St./Locust Ave. by pulling it back to cross perpendicularly to the street. It was noted that the different alternatives could be viewed as pieces and parts, and access control, laneage, etc. could be mixed from each alternative to form a preferred alternative.

Alternative 1

- Alternative 1 keeps the laneage and configuration the same as existing conditions on E. Market St.

- Alternative 1 is the concept proposed by the City's Strategic Area Investment (SIA) plan. This alternative focuses on improvements to landscaping and minimizing changes to traffic control.
- Alternative 1 maintains the existing traffic signal at E. Market St. and 7th St. It was noted in discussion that the existing signal does not meet any of the seven (7) warrants in the 2009 Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Since the signal does not currently meet warrants, the preferred alternative must be an unsignalized intersection until an engineering reason that meets one of the seven warrants is met.
- Alternative 1 removes the dedicated left turn lanes on E. High St. at Lexington Ave., 9 ½ St., and the CFA Institute Entrance. The remaining existing lane becomes a shared left/through lane to create additional width for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Alternative 1 allows left turns into and out of all unsignalized intersections between E. Jefferson St. and 10th St./Locust Ave.
- Alternative 1 maximizes the width of the planting strip where space allows.

Alternative 2

- Alternative 2 focuses on improvements to bicycle facilities and focuses on implementing traffic control to restrict left-turning movements.
- Alternative 2 introduces a striped bike lane to EB E. Market St.
- Alternative 2 removes the traffic signal at E. Market St. and 7th St. and converts 7th St. to one way northbound. This creates a pair with the existing southbound traffic on 8th St. The existing signal at 7th St. and E. Market St. is not warranted.
- Alternative 2 converts the following intersections to right-in/right-out to allow for additional width for bicycles and pedestrians:
  - 9th St. at E. Jefferson St. (no through movements allowed on E. Jefferson)
  - E. High St. at Lexington Ave.
  - E. High St. at 9 ½ St.
  - E. High St. at the CFA Institute Entrance
- Alternative 2 creates a consistent buffered on-street bicycle facility to the 10th St./Locust Ave intersection.
- Alternative 2 creates a planting strip which varies in size as space allows.
- Alternative 2 introduces a median to High Street from the 9th Street at High Street intersection to just past the CFA entrance.

Alternative 3

- Alternative 3 combines design elements from the first and second alternatives.
- Alternative 3 eliminates some on street parking on E. Market Street to introduce a EB bike lane.
- Alternative 3 removes the traffic signal on Market Street at 7th Street and introduces stop control on 7th Street.
- Alternative 3 removes dedicated left turn lanes on E. High St. at Lexington Ave., 9 ½ St. and the CFA Institute Entrance, creating a shared left/through lane to allow for additional width for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Alternative 3 converts the following intersections to left-in/right-in/right-out:
  - 9th St. at E. Jefferson St. (no through movements allowed on E. Jefferson)
  - E. High St. at Lexington Ave.

- E. High St. at 9 ½ St.
- E. High St. at the CFA Institute Entrance

- Alternative 3 implements a planted median along E. High Street from the 9th Street at E. High intersection to 10th/Locust intersection.

Schematic Design Alternatives Discussion

For each alternative, committee members agreed that Market St. is constrained preventing extensive modifications to the existing condition. Committee members asked about reconfiguring 10th St./Locust Ave. to intersect perpendicularly with E. High St. like the proposed change to Lexington Ave. Kimley-Horn discussed constraints imposed by need for through movement across E. High St. at this intersection and limits imposed by project scope and budget. Committee members introduced the possibility of installing a roundabout at the intersection of E. High St. and 10th St./Locust Ave. Kimley-Horn discussed constraints of scope, budget and right-of-way, and possibility for this intersection to be further addressed in a separate smart-scale funded project. Committee members emphasized that the uphill bicycle lane be prioritized over the downhill bicycle lane for comfort and safety of bicyclists.

Alternative 1

- Committee members asked about the widths of the sidewalks, bike lanes, and planting strips. Kimley-Horn representatives reviewed the recommended minimum widths put forth by AASHTO and Streets that Work guidelines. The cross-section on 9th St. between E. Market St. and Jefferson St. meets the minimum widths.
- Signalized intersections are located at 7th St. and E. Market St., E. High St. and 9th St., E. High St. and 10th St./Locust Ave., and 9th St. and E. Market St.

Alternative 2

- Committee members asked about the existing signalized intersection at 7th St. and E. Market St. The existing signal at 7th St. and E. Market St. is not warranted, creating a liability for the city and engineers if the signal remains and accidents occur at the intersection. Kimley-Horn explained that warrants govern whether a signal is needed according to crash analysis, and vehicles and pedestrian traffic through the intersection. The existing intersection does not meet any of the warrants for a signal.
- Committee members asked about the planned landscaping. A “small” tree will not grow beyond 25 feet in height.
- Committee members asked about the existing locations of utility poles. Utility poles are located along the sidewalk, and relocating utilities overhead to overhead will not add to the cost of the project. The locations of overhead utility poles will be determined after a preferred design is selected.
- Committee members reported that unsignalized intersections present a concern for pedestrians utilizing crosswalks, particularly at the intersection of 9th St. and E. Jefferson St. Committee members proposed the possibility of highly visible crosswalks to capture the attention of drivers.
- Committee raised concern that reducing conflicts will increase speed of traffic, making pedestrian crossing more difficult. Committee members referenced Preston Avenue and the city seeking to recreate a grid system for its streets. Kimley Horn suggested that decreasing conflict points is a safety priority to prevent traffic accidents.

- Committee members agreed that a planted median does not contribute to buffering pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Committee members raised concern of left-turning vehicles creating a queue that impedes through traffic. Kimley-Horn representatives reported traffic analysis demonstrating that few people currently attempt left turns, suggesting a low impact on traffic if right-in/right-out intersections are implemented.

Alternative 3

- Committee members discussed that the off-road bike facility could allow for counter flow for bicycles and recommended a bicycle speed limit 10 MPH on the off-road facility.
- Committee members agreed that a planted median would not contribute to sheltering pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Committee members discussed distinguishing a pathway for bicyclists along the proposed multiuse path using different colored pavement, raised elevation, or a mini curb between the bicycle path and pedestrian path. Kimley-Horn noted that a raised elevation would not be feasible; however, the design team will explore changing alternative 3 to be flush with a designated 6' space for pedestrians and 5' space for bicycles. It was noted that this facility was not consistent with the facility type along 9th Street as proposed with the Avon to Hinton bike lane project and the Belmont Bridge Project.
- Committee discussed amending alternative 3 by altering the cross-section on E. High St. between Lexington Ae. and 10th St./Locust Ave. to remove the planted median and substitute a landscaped strip to buffer bicyclists and pedestrians on a multiuse path. Kimley-Horn noted that by the time the median was transitioned out near Lexington St. it would have to transition back out to allow for the left turn lane at 10th St./Locust. These transitions are mandated by AASHTO and would require 250' and it is only 500' between the two streets. It was agreed that there was not sufficient space for landscaping between Lexington and 10th/Locust.
- Committee raised concern of bicyclists attempting to travel both ways on the proposed shared use path, or continuing to travel on the road rather than utilizing the shared use path. Committee members discussed the difficulty of transitioning bicyclists from multiuse path to the road and navigating through intersections where pedestrians utilize crosswalks. The design team agreed to review and provide a revised Alternative 3 for the Committee's review.

Alternatives Evaluation Activity

- Committee members participated in an evaluation activity to score each schematic design alternative based on the extent to which each alternative addresses the priorities identified from public engagement results.

Priority Considerations	Alternative		
	1	2	3
Pedestrian Facilities	1	3	2
Bicycle Facilities	3	2	1
Bus Stops & Amenities	2	3	1
Landscaping	1	2	1
Traffic & Travel Speeds	1	2	1
Signage & Wayfinding	1	3	2
East High / Lexington Intersection	1	3	2

Ranking 1 – 3 indicates the extent to which each alternative addresses the priority consideration, with "1" indicating the best fit option for addressing the priority consideration, and "3" indicating the least fit option.

Next Steps

- Open House will take place August 15, 2018 from 5:30 to 7:30 at City Space
- 2 weeks prior to the Open House, Kimley-Horn will circulate revised alternatives addressing the committee discussion. The Committee will have one week to provide comments or input before concepts are finalized for the Open House.