

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	December 3, 2018
Action Required:	Vote on Resolution
Presenter:	Tim Motsch, Transportation Project Manager Brian McPeters, Kimley-Horn
Staff Contacts:	Alex Ikefuna, NDS Director Tony Edwards, Development Services Manager Tim Motsch, Transportation Project Manager
Title:	E. High Streetscape Project – Resolution Confirming Conformance with City’s Comprehensive Plan & Authorization to Commence Final Design

Background:

The E. High Street corridor and Market Street are vital urban streets and an important connection between the Martha Jefferson Neighborhood and the Downtown Pedestrian Mall. The City of Charlottesville has been engaged in a process to enhance this corridor and the adjoining neighborhoods with urban amenities and safe, interconnected streets that promote walking, biking, and efficient public transit while maintaining levels of service (LOS) for vehicular traffic. This corridor was highlighted for improvements in the Strategic Investment Area (SIA) Plan that was previously adopted by City Council. The project intent as listed in the RFP includes:

- The East High Street corridor is an entrance corridor into Downtown Charlottesville
- The East High Street corridor should be an enjoyable pedestrian experience
- Elicit meaningful public input
- Create a schematic design of streetscape improvements in the Market Street / 9th St. / East High Street Corridor.
- Create an appropriate and functioning streetscape consistent with City goals, the SIA Plan, and the Streets that Work Plan
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle-safe infrastructure, including appropriate lighting throughout the corridor, especially at intersections.
- It will also be coordinated with and a service as continuation of the improvements included with Belmont Bridge Replacement project south of the E. Market Street intersection.
- Maintain and/or improve existing bus stops
- Integrate green infrastructure to enhance the City’s stormwater management and urban forestry goals.

- Develop the schematic design and provide detailed construction documents that illustrate significant streetscape improvements in keeping with the planning and urban design objectives listed above.

A Request for Proposals was advertised that included these design parameters as well as an extensive public participation process and in December 2017, the City of Charlottesville contracted with Kimley-Horn, an engineering consulting firm, to develop plans for the East High Streetscape Improvements.

In addition to the design parameters established by the RFP, Kimley-Horn also researched a variety of initiatives within the City of Charlottesville that are focused on enhancing the vibrancy and quality of life, including the City of Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Streets That Work, and the Strategic Investment Area. With a firm grasp of background information, the project team began the public involvement process to ensure agreement with the project's purpose and need before beginning development of a conceptual design.

Discussion:

Preferred Conceptual Design Concept: The preferred Conceptual Design Concept aligns closely with the adopted Strategic Investment Area (SIA) Plan which was modified and discussed during community engagement activities based on feedback received. In regard to this direction, the preferred Conceptual Design includes the following main features:

- 5' wide conventional bicycle lanes both directions on E. Market Street from 7th Street to 9th Street
- 6.5' wide buffered bicycle lanes both direction on 9th Street from E. Market Street to E. High Street
- 4.5' landscape/planting space from back of curb along 9th Street from E. Market Street to E. High Street.
- Typical 6' wide concrete sidewalk along E. Market Street, 9th Street and E. High Street with a minimum concrete sidewalk width of 5'.
- Replacement of existing traffic signals at E. Market Street and 7th Street, E. Market Street and 9th Street, 9th Street and E. High Street and E. High Street and 10th Street/Locust Avenue.

Widespread support for the conceptual design concept has been confirmed and/or adjusted based on community engagement below. Further, the Tree Commission, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee have been engaged and provided comments. These stakeholder groups have also provided detailed comments that will be explored during the next stage of final design and which is available under the resources tab at www.easthighstreetscape.org.

Comprehensive Plan Alignment: On November 13, 2013 the Planning Commission voted unanimously that the Conceptual Design is consistent with the City of Charlottesville adopted 2013 Comprehensive Plan. The following excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan were used as support and are followed with project details on how these goals are being met:

The following denotes alignment with the City of Charlottesville adopted 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Transportation:

- Goal 1: Increase safe, convenient and pleasant accommodations for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities that improve the quality of life within the

community and within individual Neighborhoods.

- This project provides for bicycle facilities on Market St., 9th St., and E. High St. In addition, the sidewalks will be a consistent, accessible width of a minimum of 5'
- Goal 1.2: Provide convenient and safe pedestrian connections within ¼ miles of all commercial and employment centers, transit routes, schools and parks
 - This project provides sidewalks to enable multi-modal connections to transit routes and employment centers
- Goal 1.3 Provide design features on roadways, such as street trees within buffers, street furniture and sidewalk widths that improve the safety and comfort level of all users and contribute to the City's environmental goals.
 - This project includes street tree plantings within buffers where appropriate as well as 5'-6' wide sidewalks.
- Goal 1.4: Explore and implement safe, convenient and visually attractive crossing alternatives to enable pedestrians and bicycles to cross major thoroughfares
 - The project provides for visible, safe pedestrian crossings at intersections.
- Goal 1.5: Continue to include bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in conjunction with the planning and design of all major road projects, all new development and road paving projects
 - The project provides for consistent 5' wide buffered bike lanes between Market and High St., then 5' wide bike lanes from High St. to 10th St. Additionally, the bicycle facilities on Market St. are to remain.
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- Goal 1.6 Consistently apply ADA standards to facility design and ensure that accessible curb ramps exist at all pedestrian crossings where conditions allow.
 - Curb ramps will be provided at all crossings.

Urban Design:

- Goal 1: Continue Charlottesville's history of architectural and design excellence by maintaining existing traditional design features while encouraging creative, context-sensitive, contemporary planning and design.
 - Per the public comment received, design focus is on seeking to provide and enhance multimodal connections between the surrounding neighborhoods and the Pedestrian Mall.
- Goal 1.1: Emphasize the importance of public buildings, public spaces, and other public improvements as opportunities to promote a sense of place and a welcoming environment for residents and visitors.
 - The project will encourage pedestrian use through accessible design concepts. Enhanced landscape strips will be incorporated into the final design.
- Goal 1.2: Promote Charlottesville's diverse architectural and cultural heritage by recognizing, respecting, and enhancing the distinct characteristics of each neighborhood.
 - This project will be coordinated with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources as well as receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City's Board of Architectural Review.
- Goal 1.3: Facilitate development of nodes of density and vitality in the City's Mixed Use Corridors, and encourage vitality, pedestrian movement, and visual interest throughout the city
 - The project provides for upgraded pedestrian and bicycle facilities will enhance the neighborhood and corridor
- Goal 1.4: Develop pedestrian-friendly environments in Charlottesville that connect neighborhoods to community facilities, to commercial areas and employment centers, and that connect neighborhoods to each other, to promote a healthier community.

- The project provides for an upgraded multi-modal connection from the pedestrian mall in downtown Charlottesville to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- 1.5: Encourage community vitality and interaction through the incorporation of art in public spaces, neighborhoods, signage, and gateways.
 - Opportunities for art will be considered in appropriate areas
- 1.6: Encourage the incorporation of meaningful public spaces, defined as being available to the general public, into urban design efforts.
 - The creation of consistent pedestrian space will encourage public space use
- 1.7: Promote design excellence for public projects and installations at all scales.
 - The request for proposals created a project development process centered around design. The extensive public participation process is ensuring design excellence -is sought in meeting the community's present and future needs.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan:

Approval of this agenda item upholds the City's commitment to create "a connected community" by improving upon our existing transportation infrastructure. In addition, it would contribute to Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, to be "A Beautiful and Sustainable Natural and Built Environment" by meeting Objective 3.1 Engage in robust and context sensitive urban planning and implementation; Objective 3.2. Provide reliable and high-quality infrastructure; and Objective 3.3. Provide a variety of transportation and mobility options.

Community Engagement:

To help guide the project, the City appointed a project Steering Committee. The process also involves coordination with the following City Council appointed stakeholder groups:

- ADA Advisory Committee
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Downtown Business Association/Chamber of Commerce
- PLACE Design Task Force
- Planning Commission
- Tree Commission

The City of Charlottesville has provided multiple opportunities for the public to provide input into the plan development process. A project website, an on-line survey, two community events (Streetscape Summit and Open House) as well as steering committee meetings occurred between March 8th and August 15th. The steering committee meetings were open to the public.

Information presented and gathered at the meetings can be found at www.easthighstreetscape.org, however a summary of each event is below:

Project Website:

The Project website (www.easthighstreetscape.org) contains information that has been presented to date as part of the process. Information presented includes:

- Project background
- Project schedule

- A “resource” page that provides access to information presented and gathered from community events, and information presented at the stakeholder meetings
- A contact form
- A “get involved” page
- An “FAQ” page

As of October 15, 2018, the project website has logged over 1,900 unique page views, and approximately 800 unique users.

Community Event 1: Streetscape Summit, April 21, 2018

A Streetscape Summit was held on Saturday, April 21 at CitySpace from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The event was set up as an interactive workshop designed to gather input on the East High Streetscape project. The event was organized in a variety of stations to help inform the understanding of existing conditions as well as potential concepts that would be incorporated into the streetscape design. The stations focused on community values, issues and needs, and design elements. In addition to the activity stations, participants were invited to participate in one of two walkabouts of the study area. The MetroQuest survey was featured at the workshop and remained open until May 31, 2018. Attendees received a passport at sign-in to encourage participation at each station.

A summary document provided on www.easthighstreetscape.org briefly summarizes the community input data collected at the event and offers stakeholders and community members the opportunity to see the thoughts of others in the community. In addition to data collected in person, the event served as the launch for the MetroQuest survey.

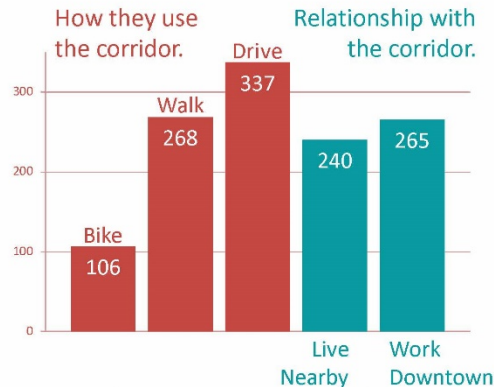
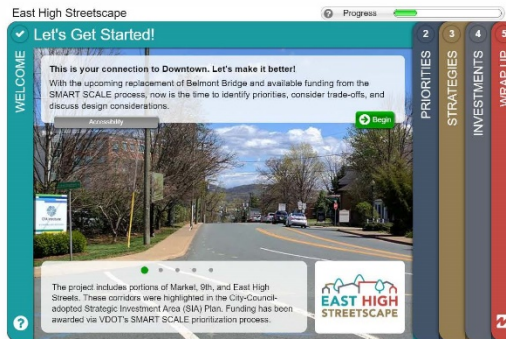
On-Line MetroQuest Survey:

The MetroQuest survey was active from April 18, 2018 to May 31, 2018. A total of 530 participants provided 13,495 data points and 380 written comments. The goal of the survey was to educate the public about the project and collect feedback on project priorities, tradeoffs to help direct design, and design preferences related to function and aesthetics. The survey was design to mirror the activities of the in-person activities at the Streetscape Summit, and included:

- Priority Ranking
- Design strategies, which included categories such as bicycle facilities, bus stops and amenities, landscaping, lighting, pedestrian facilities, public art and branding, signage and wayfinding, and traffic and travel times,
- Streetscape Investments, which allowed for the user to prioritize improvements by utilizing a monetary value.
- Wrap Up, which included another forum for additional comments, and allowed for users to sign up for project updates

The results comments for each category can be found on www.easthighstreetscape.org, on the resources page. Additionally, the 380 written comments can be found on the project website as well. The amount of participation captured in the MetroQuest survey is summarized in the below graphic:

530	participants
13,495	individual data points
380	written comments
4/18 to 5/31	survey period



- Many comments used words such as simple, functional, aesthetic, and accessible to describe the ideal streetscape.
- Most people prioritize design features that directly relate to the movement of people (regardless of mode). Ancillary investments such as branding, public art, and wayfinding typically rated lower.
- Enhanced design requests typically focused on buffering bicyclists and pedestrians from traffic.



Community Event 2: Open House, August 15, 2018

Project team members held an open house on August 15, 2018, at City Space from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. The open house allowed the public and stakeholders to view the streetscape concept that was developed based on previous engagement events, including the Streetscape Summit, MetroQuest Survey, and Steering Committee meetings. The event was designed as an informal meeting with large plots of the concept, illustrative cross sections, traffic exhibits, and a summary of engagement results. In addition to collecting general comments, the Open House collected specific feedback on priority considerations (as identified in earlier engagement efforts) and access control at two locations along the corridor.

Attendees were given a worksheet once they signed in to make it easier for them to weigh in on the elements noted above. An overview of the Open House is available on the project website www.easthighstreetscape.org. The overview points out common themes and takeaways from the feedback received during the event, as well as noting the written comments received on the worksheets.

Steering Committee and Stakeholder Meetings

Throughout the process, the design team collaborated with the Steering Committee and various other boards, committees and agencies to receive input and feedback during the design process. Steering committee meetings were open to the public. The following groups were met with on the following dates:

- Steering Committee: March 8, 2018, and June 28, 2018
- Joint meeting with Tree Commission and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee: September 27, 2018
- PLACE Committee Meeting: November 8, 2018
- Planning Commission Work Session: October 2, 2018
- Planning Commission: November 13, 2018

Meeting agendas and summaries can be found under the resources tab on the project website www.easthighstreetscape.org. Additionally, a Technical committee was formed which is comprised of representatives from appropriate City departments. The technical committee held meetings on the project on March 7, 2018 and June 28, 2018. The technical committee meetings confirmed input received from the public and stakeholder groups could be technically attained and then maintained.

Budgetary Impact:

The preferred Conceptual Design Concept falls within the established budget comprised of a combination of City, State and Federal funding sources. The current draft of the City of Charlottesville FY 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Program includes an additional appropriation to enable a betterment for undergrounding of franchise utilities along E. Market Street and 9th Street. If the appropriation were to be approved in the upcoming CIP, then overhead franchise utilities would be placed underground as part of the project.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the preferred Conceptual Design Concept and authorization to proceed with commencement of the final design phase of the project.

Alternatives:

None.

Attachments:

Preferred Conceptual Design
Resolution of the Charlottesville Planning Commission
Resolution for City Council
PowerPoint Presentation for City Council



**RESOLUTION
OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDING THE EAST HIGH STREETScape PROJECT IS IN
CONFORMANCE WITH THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Whereas, this Planning Commission and City Council jointly held a public hearing on the proposed E. High Streetscape Project concept, after notice given as required by law, NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED that this Planning Commission confirms that the general character, location and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof.

Adopted by the Charlottesville Planning Commission, the 13th day of November 2018.

Attest: 
Secretary, Charlottesville Planning Commission

RESOLUTION
APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
BY INCORPORATING THE E. HIGH STREETScape PROJECTS PREFERRED
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2018, after notice given as required by law, the Charlottesville Planning Commission and Charlottesville City Council conducted a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Charlottesville (2013), to include the contents of the preferred conceptual design of the E. High Streetscape Project (“Comprehensive Plan Amendment”); and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2018, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending approval by City Council of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, and certifying a copy of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Council for its consideration; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that, upon consideration of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment, the City Council hereby adopts the preferred conceptual design of the E. High Streetscape Project as an amendment to the City’s Comprehensive Plan and authorizes commencement of final design. Neighborhood Development Services staff shall post on the City’s website notice of Council’s adoption of this update, along with a copy of the approved update.