

# Public Engagement Summary

---



*Draft – March 5, 2019*

PREPARED FOR



PREPARED BY

**Kimley»»Horn**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Introduction 1

Communication Procedures .....	1
1	

Overview of Activities .....	2
------------------------------	---

Project Committees .....	2
2	

Engagement Events .....	3
-------------------------	---

### Summary of Public Engagement Events ..... 4

Steering Committee Meeting #1 (March 8, 2018) .....	5
---	---

Activities .....	5
------------------	---

Streetscape Summit (April 21, 2018) .....	6
---	---

Activities .....	6
------------------	---

MetroQuest Survey (April 18, 2018 to May 31, 2018) .....	8
--	---

Screens 8

Steering Committee Meeting #2 (June 28, 2018) .....	9
---	---

Schematic Design Alternatives .....	9
-------------------------------------	---

Schematic Design Alternatives Discussion .....	9
--	---

Open House (August 15, 2018) .....	10
------------------------------------	----

Priority Considerations .....	10
-------------------------------	----

Alternatives .....	10
--------------------	----

### Summary of Stakeholder Group Meetings ..... 11

### Preferred Conceptual Design ..... 11



## Introduction

The Public Engagement Summary provides a brief overview of public engagement events and key takeaways. The engagement process was designed to communicate relevant project information and gather community input for consideration as incremental decisions were made. To achieve success and maintain schedule, a Public Engagement Plan was designed to maintain coordination between the public, City of Charlottesville, Virginia Department of Transportation, and the consultant team.

## Communication Procedures

The tight deadline and SmartScale funding of the East High Streetscape Project required efficient communication between staff, the consulting team, elected officials, the community, and stakeholders. The PEP included a Communication Protocol that outlined general strategies that were employed throughout the project to maintain smooth coordination and enhance communication among the various parties involved in the design process. The Communication Protocol focused on internal and external communication channels.

Internal (Project Team)	External (Public)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Engagement Plan</li> <li>Email</li> <li>Memos</li> <li>EastHighStreetscape.org</li> <li>Data Transfers</li> <li>Technical Committee Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EastHighStreetscape.org (with online comment form)</li> <li>Steering Committee Meetings</li> <li>Streetscape Summit</li> <li>MetroQuest Survey</li> <li>Open House</li> <li>Public Engagement Summary</li> </ul>



## Overview of Activities

The community engagement process for the East High Streetscape project generated information to supplement technical data. When communicating with the public, the project team focused on explaining why decisions were made and showing where in the planning process those decisions were made. The following activities were conducted as part of the process and are referenced in this summary.

## Project Committees

The East High Streetscape project was led by two committees: a **Technical Committee** charged with decision making and a **Steering Committee** that served an advisory role to the Technical Committee. Representatives of the committees include:

### Technical Committee (Decision-Making)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Amanda Poncy</b>, Bike/Ped Committee</li> <li>○ <b>Brennen Duncan</b>, NDS City Traffic Engineer</li> <li>○ <b>Martin Silman</b>, NDS City Engineer</li> <li>○ <b>Carrie Rainey</b>, PLACE, NDS Planning</li> <li>○ <b>Zack Lofton</b>, NDS Planning</li> <li>○ <b>Brenda Kelley</b>, Redevelopment Manager</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Doug Ehman</b>, Parks and Recreation</li> <li>○ <b>William Sclafani</b>, Police</li> <li>○ <b>Eric Thomas</b>, Police</li> <li>○ <b>Jay Davis</b>, Fire and Rescue</li> <li>○ <b>Jason McIlwee</b>, Utilities</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

### Steering Committee (Advisory)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Rosamond Casey</b>, Little High Neighborhood</li> <li>○ <b>Missy Creasy</b>, Planning Commission</li> <li>○ <b>Jennifer B. Feist</b>, Murray Enterprises, LLC/Tarleton Oaks</li> <li>○ <b>Lisa Green</b>, Planning Commission and Entrance Corridor</li> <li>○ <b>Greg Jackson</b>, Little High Neighborhood</li> <li>○ <b>Eberhard Jehle</b>, Martha Jefferson Neighborhood</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>David Katz</b>, Belmont Carlton Neighborhood</li> <li>○ <b>Brian Menard</b>, Tree Commission</li> <li>○ <b>Michael P. Ronayne</b>, Tree Commission</li> <li>○ <b>Lena Seville</b>, Bike/Ped Committee</li> <li>○ <b>Michael Wheelwright</b>, North Downtown Neighborhood</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



## Engagement Events

Various engagement strategies targeted specific stakeholders and/or the community at-large to 1) engage community leaders, 2) Offer decision points for stakeholders and the public, and 3) Sequence engagement activities to build support and participation.

Activity	Project Website ( <a href="http://www.easthighstreetscape.org">www.easthighstreetscape.org</a> )
Target Audience	Public   Stakeholders   Steering Committee
Objective	Serve as a portal for plan information
Activity	Technical Committee Meetings (March 8, 2018 / June 28, 2018)
Target Audience	City Staff
Objective	Make decisions based on advisement from Consultant Team and Steering Committee
Activity	Steering Committee Meeting #1 (March 8, 2018)
Target Audience	Steering Committee   Public (open meeting)
Objective	Discuss purpose of committee, identify factors for success, and establish preliminary needs and priorities to inform the activities for the Streetscape Summit
Activity	Streetscape Summit – Community Event 1 (April 21, 2018)
Target Audience	Public   Stakeholders
Objective	Drop-in workshop with interactive stations and guided walking tours of the study area Identify community values, priorities, and vision through a series of interactive stations
Activity	MetroQuest Survey (April 18, 2018 to May 31, 2018)
Target Audience	Public   Stakeholders
Objective	Offer opportunity for input to be provided through an online platform
Activity	Steering Committee Meeting #2 (June 28, 2018)
Target Audience	Steering Committee   Public (open meeting)
Objective	Review public engagement outcomes, discuss context and existing conditions, and review preliminary design concepts
Activity	Open House – Community Event 2 (August 15, 2018)
Target Audience	Public   Stakeholders
Objective	Memorialize outcomes of the engagement process, present conceptual streetscape plan, and provide information on design development and construction
Activity	Presentations to Boards and Commissions (Various Dates)
Target Audience	Bike and Pedestrian Committee   Tree Commission   Planning Commission   City Council
Objective	Present final concept to City agencies, boards, and councils for comment and approval



## Summary of Public Engagement Events

The following sections provides a brief summary and key takeaways from the Steering Committee meetings, community events, online survey, and presentations to boards and committees. **More detailed summaries for each event are available under separate cover.**

Event	Key Takeaways
<b>Steering Committee Meeting #1</b> <i>March 8, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Key Words:</b> safety, gateway, walkable</li> <li>● <b>Strengths:</b> location, connections</li> <li>● <b>Challenges:</b> traffic, balancing modes</li> <li>● <b>Priorities:</b> Pedestrian Facilities, Landscaping, Bicycle Facilities, Traffic and Travel Speeds</li> <li>● <b>Expectations:</b> travel options, connectivity, land use/design</li> </ul>
<b>Streetscape Summit</b> <i>April 21, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Key Words:</b> safe, pedestrian-friendly, welcoming</li> <li>● <b>Priorities:</b> Pedestrian Facilities, Landscaping, Bicycle Facilities, Traffic and Travel Speeds</li> <li>● <b>Preferred Features:</b> buffered bike lanes, high-visibility crosswalks, trees</li> <li>● <b>Other:</b> Lexington/High intersection</li> </ul>
<b>MetroQuest Survey</b> <i>April 18, 2018 to May 31, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Key Words:</b> simple, functional, aesthetic, accessible</li> <li>● <b>Priorities:</b> features that directly relate to the movement of people (regardless of mode)</li> <li>● <b>Enhanced Design Requests:</b> buffering bicyclists and pedestrians from traffic</li> </ul>
<b>Steering Committee Meeting #2</b> <i>June 28, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Focus:</b> Reviewing alternatives so a preferred concept could be presented at the Open House</li> <li>● <b>Agreement:</b> Constraints prevent complete modifications to some areas (e.g. Market Street) and limit options to the entirety of the study corridor</li> <li>● <b>More Discussion Requested:</b> Widths for sidewalks, bike lanes, bike buffers, and planting strips</li> </ul>
<b>Open House</b> <i>August 15, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Allocation of Space:</b> Participants differed on whether space should go toward bicyclists (bike lane and bike lane buffer) or a planting strip.</li> <li>● <b>Pedestrian Crossings:</b> Pedestrian crossings were identified as important, particularly at East Jefferson Street.</li> <li>● <b>Access Control:</b> Participants supported limited access (left-in / right-in / right-out) at Lexington Avenue. Participants also supported limited access at the CFA Institute Entrance, however several comments expressed a lack of opinion.</li> </ul>

## Steering Committee Meeting #1 (March 8, 2018)

At the first Steering Committee meeting, members discussed the purpose of the committee and how other groups will be involved, identified factors for success, and established preliminary needs and priorities to inform the activities for the Streetscape Summit on April 21, 2018.

### Activities

#### One Word

During introductions, committee members were asked to use one word to describe the study corridor today and one word to describe their ideal vision for the future.

- **Today:** Challenging, disjointed, suburban in character
- **In the Future:** Multimodal, safe, enhanced gateway

#### S.C.O.R.E.

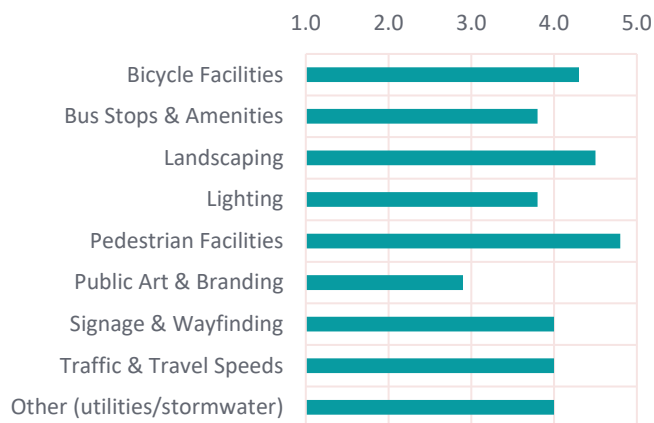
Each committee member identified Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks, and Expectations. The purpose of the activity was to spur conversation among the committee and to explore the overlaps between the strengths/opportunities and challenges/risks. The following table summarizes recurring themes:

- **Strengths:** Location, Connections, Aesthetics
- **Challenges:** Traffic Flow, Multimodal Conditions, Engagement, Land Use
- **Opportunities:** Travel Options, Gateways, Aesthetics, Lasting Impact
- **Risks:** Traffic and Travel Operations, Disconnects
- **Expectations:** Travel Options, Connectivity, Land Use and Urban Design

#### Design Elements

The committee began the process of navigating project constraints (e.g., budget and space) by prioritizing eight design elements by indicating the importance of each categories and then ranking them 1 through 8. The eight design considerations were: Community Gateway, Improved Approaches, Innovative Design, Landscaping, Lighting, Multimodal Design, Scenic Viewsheds, and Travel Speeds.

##### Importance



##### Ranking

	Design Consideration	Avg.
1	Pedestrian Facilities	1.40
2	Bicycle Facilities	3.70
3	Landscaping	3.80
4	Traffic & Travel Speeds	4.56
5	Lighting	4.89
6	Signage & Wayfinding	4.89
7	Bus Stops & Amenities	5.30
8	Other (utilities/stormwater)	7.00
9	Public Art & Branding	7.22

## Streetscape Summit (April 21, 2018)

The Streetscape Summit was an interactive workshop designed organized in a variety of stations to help inform the understanding of existing conditions as well as potential concepts that could be incorporated into the streetscape design. 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.

Objectives for the Streetscape Summit included:

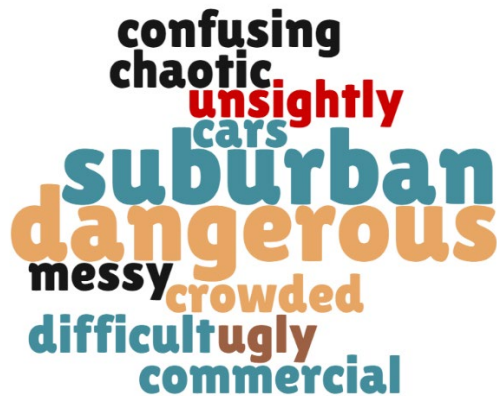
1. Identify community values through a variety of interactive exercises
2. Educate the public on constraints and opportunities associated with the streetscape design
3. Gather feedback on a variety of design elements

## Activities

### One Word

The One Word exercise asked participants to describe East High Street today and describe what East High Street should be in the future.

**TODAY, East High Street is...**

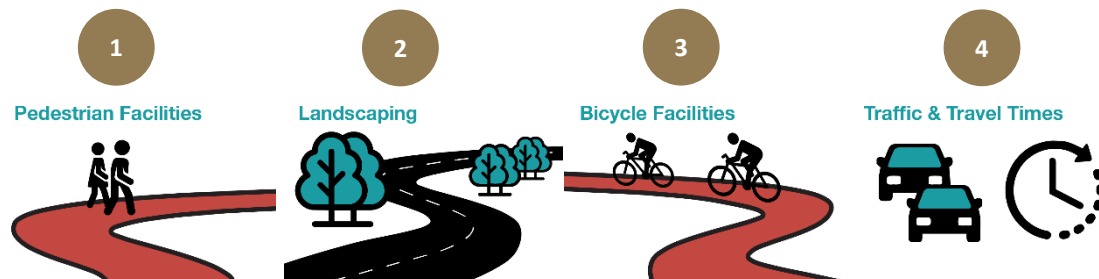


**IN THE FUTURE, East High Street should be...**



### Priority Pyramid

The eight design considerations introduced at Steering Committee Meeting #1 were presented at the Streetscape Summit, and participants were asked to select and prioritize their top six. Each choice was then weighted, with those being ranked as a first priority receiving a higher score than those ranked lower. The top four priorities were:





### *Thought Wall*

The Thought Wall allowed participants to express more in-depth thoughts, ideas, concerns, or suggestions on individual sheets of paper. One sheet was reserved for their most important comment. After writing their comments, participants posted the comment under a banner representing the design consideration that best represents the thought. A review of the comments revealed several recurring themes that focused on the need to prioritize walking over cars, including street trees, and reconfiguring key intersections such as Lexington and High Street. When all comments were evaluated against the themes, the following rankings emerged:

- **Frequency (total comments) |** 1. Landscaping 2. Pedestrian Facilities 3. Traffic and Travel Speeds
- **Intensity (“most important” comments) |** 1. Bicycle Facilities 2. Landscaping 3. Traffic and Travel Speeds

### *Street Builder*

The Street Builder activity allowed participants to think critically about the future design of specific segments within the study corridor and build a their “dream street” and specific designs for East 9<sup>th</sup> Street, High Street, and Market Street. Participants were forced to remove or change elements of the street to make **the** design fit within the necessary dimensions. The most popular street elements were **street trees, sidewalks (of any dimension), and bicycle lanes**. Other popular elements included bioswales, multiuse paths, and buffers to create protected bicycle facilities. Most of the street designs were 2-lane cross sections.

### *Visual Preference Survey*

To better understand the community’s aesthetic preferences, participants were presented with boards displaying various images organized into four elements (Travel Realm Improvements, Intersection Improvements, Sidewalks and Lighting, and Branding and Wayfinding) and used dots to vote for their three favorite images on each board. Characteristics of top images for each element included:

- **Travel Realm Improvements |** dedicated bicycle facilities with landscaped or natural buffers protecting cyclists from traffic
- **Intersection Improvements |** raised crosswalks and aesthetic treatments) and natural landscaping
- **Sidewalks and Lighting |** wide sidewalks with buffers from traffic, street trees, landscaping, and integrated lighting
- **Branding and Wayfinding |** modern signage elements that convey a continuity of branding and help with navigation

### *Strong Places/Weak Places*

To better understand perceptions of the study area, participants identified strong places (desirable, special, safe, and reflect well on the corridor) and weak places (unsafe, undesirable, eyesores, and overall reflect poorly on the community) along the corridor and in the surrounding area. Weak locations were clustered along the length of the corridor, while strong locations were mostly located in Downtown and the neighborhoods to the north.



## MetroQuest Survey (April 18, 2018 to May 31, 2018)

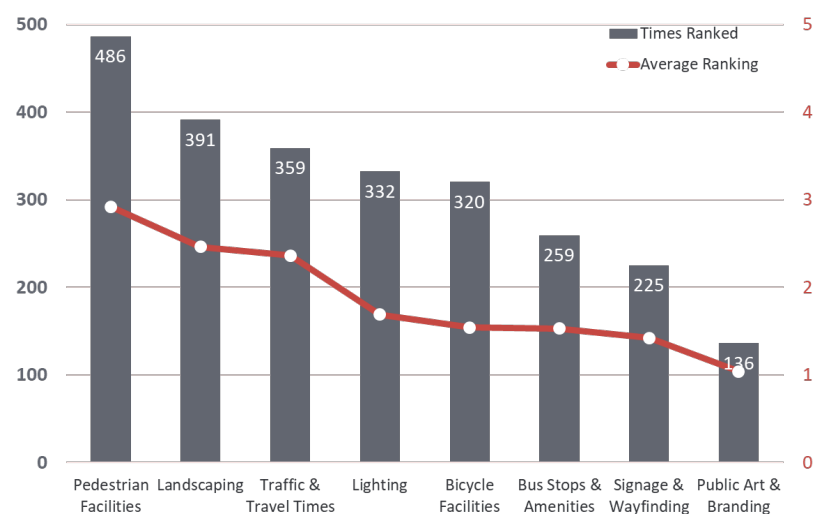
An online survey developed using the MetroQuest platform provided an additional opportunity for the public and stakeholders to offer input. The survey was designed to mirror the Streetscape Summit as closely as possible, so that input can be compared and collated for a better understanding of the community's overall preferences and priorities. The level of participation exceeded expectations: **530** participants | **13,495** individual data points | **380** written comments.

### Screens

The survey included five screens that guided participants through the process of learning about the project and providing input.

### Priorities

Design decisions were informed in part by constraints such as time, space, and money. Participants were asked to identify which design elements were important to them. The priorities, whether based on the frequency or intensity, included Pedestrian Facilities, Landscaping, and Traffic & Travel Times. Comments on this screen used words such as simple, functional, aesthetic, and accessible to describe the ideal streetscape



### Strategies

Participants were asked to rate how much they liked design features for each of the priorities elements they identified in the previous screen. The design preferences were identified.

- **Pedestrian Facilities** | wide, buffered sidewalks
- **Landscaping** | enhanced sidewalk buffers and planted medians
- **Traffic & Travel Times** | traffic safety enhancements and turn lanes
- **Lighting** | pedestrian-scale lighting
- **Bicycle Facilities** | buffered bike lanes
- **Bus Stops & Amenities** | bus stops with seating
- **Signage & Wayfinding** | pedestrian and vehicle wayfinding
- **Public Art & Branding** | integrated public art

### Investments

Participants were asked how they would prioritize spending \$100 on improvements. Fixed costs were set at \$30 to account for planning and design, utilities, and right-of-way. High investment in sidewalks and lighting (including landscaping) continued the trend for these features being a priority. While Branding & Wayfinding received the least investment, those who invested funds in the category invested a higher portion of it.

## Steering Committee Meeting #2 (June 28, 2018)

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.

### Schematic Design Alternatives

Three schematic design alternatives were presented at the meeting. The alternatives maximized the available right-of-way to address priorities identified in previous public engagement events. The alternatives could be viewed as pieces and parts so access control, laneage, etc. could be selected à la carte to form a preferred alternative. Consistent features of the alternatives included:

- Reducing 9th Street between East Market Street and East High Street to three lanes with one travel lane northbound and southbound and a center lane for left turns
- Removing the dedicated right-turn lane at the corner of the Carlton Oaks development and converting the remaining lane to a shared right/through lane, creating an area of public space
- Reorienting Lexington Avenue to intersect perpendicularly with East High Street
- Shortening the crosswalk across East High Street on the west side of the intersection with 10th Street/Locust Avenue

Details on how the alternatives differed can be viewed in the meeting materials (presentation and detailed summary) offered under separate cover.

### Schematic Design Alternatives Discussion

The focus of the meeting was a facilitated discussion on the alternatives. The project team refined the alternatives into preferred alternative to be presented at the Open House. Key elements of the discussion included:

- Agreement that Market Street is constrained preventing extensive modifications to the existing condition
- Constraints imposed by need for through movement across East High Street at the 10<sup>th</sup> Street/Locust Avenue intersection and limits imposed by project scope and budget
- Constraints of scope, budget and right-of-way that limit the ability to install a roundabout at the intersection of East High Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Street/Locust Avenue
- Discussion about prioritizing the uphill bicycle lane over the downhill bicycle lane for comfort and safety of bicyclists
- Discussion of widths for sidewalks, bike lanes, and planting strips
- Review of signalized intersection locations
- Discussion of appropriate tree plantings
- Discuss about the existing locations of utility poles
- Concern that reducing conflict points could increase average travel speeds
- Discussion of on-road versus off-road bicycle facilities

The meeting concluded with 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. This activity was adapted for use in the Open House



## Open House (August 15, 2018)

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 received a worksheet to make it easier for them to weigh in on these elements.

## Priority Considerations

Participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 how well the streetscape concept addressed priority considerations identified through previous engagement activities. An optional comment also was requested.

- **Pedestrian Facilities** | Preference to return both crosswalks at East Jefferson; Preference for wider sidewalks where possible
- **Bicycle Facilities** | Differing opinion on the width of the bike buffer versus the width of the planting strip
- **Traffic & Travel Speeds** | Maintain appropriate levels of access; Keep travel speeds low
- **Landscaping** | Prefer planted medians where possible; Add street trees; Wider landscape buffers or treegrates preferred

## Alternatives

Participants were asked to select from multiple alternatives for a few locations along the corridor that had unresolved considerations.

- **Lexington Avenue Intersection** | The option that included left-in/right-in/right-out access was preferred by more than 70% of participants. Comments focused on that option as safer, better for walking, and reduced queueing.
- **CFA Institute Entrance** | The option that included left-in/right-in/right-out access was preferred by approximately 60% of participants. Comments referenced the need to accommodate large trucks for deliveries.



## Summary of Stakeholder Group Meetings

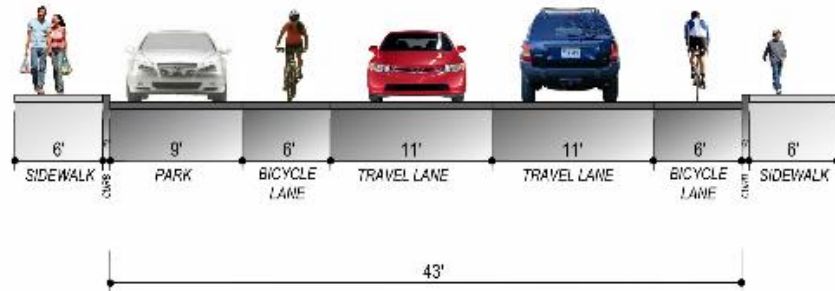
Following completion of the formal engagement phase of the East High Streetscape Project, the engagement activities continued with presentations, discussions and formal actions taken by the following Stakeholder Groups, City Committees and Commissions. **More detailed summaries for each event are available under separate cover.**

Event	Key Takeaways
<b>Charlottesville Bicycle &amp; Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Charlottesville Tree Commission</b> <i>September 27, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Focus:</b> Resolution of competing interests for width on the typical sections between bicycle and landscape/planting space.</li> <li>● <b>Approval:</b> Endorsement of a compromise that will typically provide 4.5' wide planting space (behind back of curb and before the concrete sidewalk) and a 5' wide bicycle lane with a 1.5' wide buffer along 9<sup>th</sup> Street between E. Market Street and E. High Street.</li> <li>● <b>More Discussion Requested:</b> Actual tree soil volumes.</li> </ul>
<b>Charlottesville PLACE Design Task Force</b> <i>November 8, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Focus:</b> Recommend action to the City Planning Commission concerning the character, location and extent of the proposed improvements being in accordance with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>● <b>Approval:</b> Endorsement of funding the undergrounding of overhead utilities, review current zoning and make recommendations for changes to be consistent with the design, encourage design compatibility with the Belmont Bridge Replacement Project, investigate landscaping and plantings for use as storm water management, consider how plantings help mitigate vehicular exhaust, explore mountable median use between E. High Street and Locust, explore a median between 9<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Market Street, provide all four crosswalks at 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Jefferson Avenue</li> <li>● <b>More Discussion Requested:</b> Continued public engagement opportunities, design of a public plaza in front of Tarleton Oaks and consider eliminating concrete crosswalks and using thermoplastic markings.</li> </ul>
<b>City Planning Commission</b> <i>November 13, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Focus:</b> Confirm that the E. High Streetscape Project design was in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>● <b>Approval:</b> The Planning Commission confirmed that the general character, location and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>City Council</b> <i>December 3, 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Approval:</b> Approved the preferred conceptual design of the E. High Streetscape Project and authorized commencement of final design.</li> </ul>

## Preferred Conceptual Design

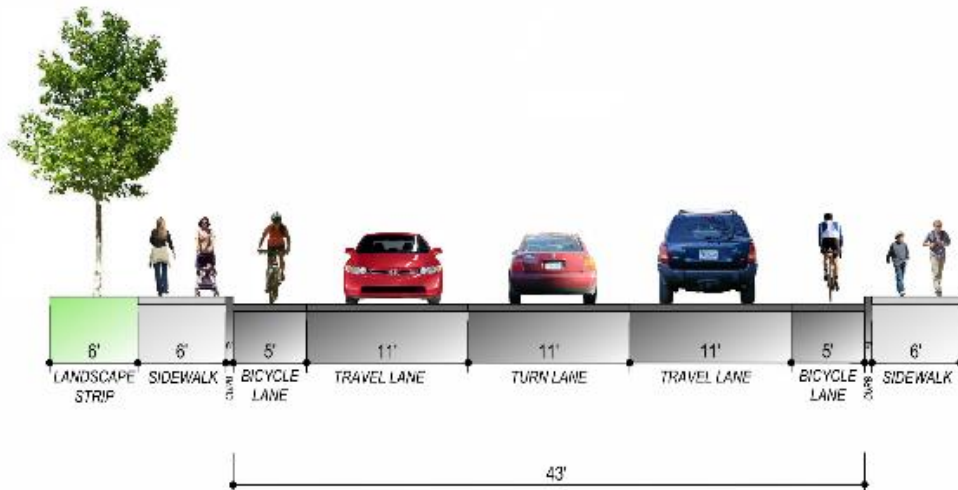
The following concept plan and typical section depict the preferred conceptual design for the E. High Streetscape Project.





SECTION A - MARKET ST BETWEEN 8TH ST. AND 7TH ST.

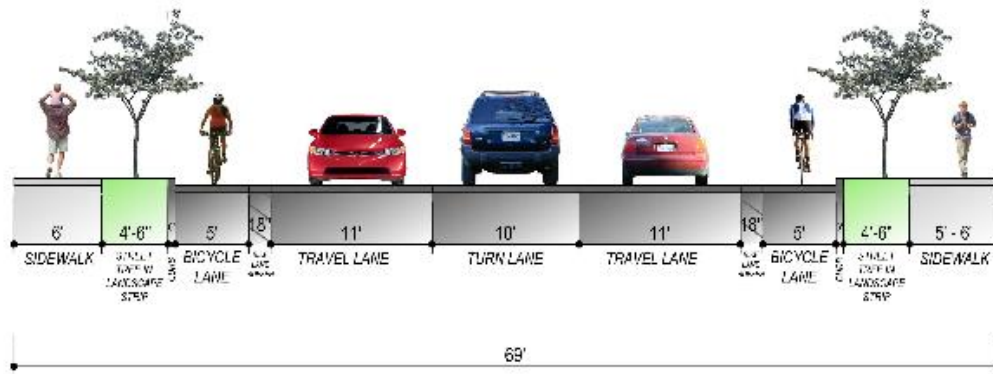
Charlottesville, VA



SECTION B - MARKET ST BETWEEN 8TH ST. AND 9TH ST.

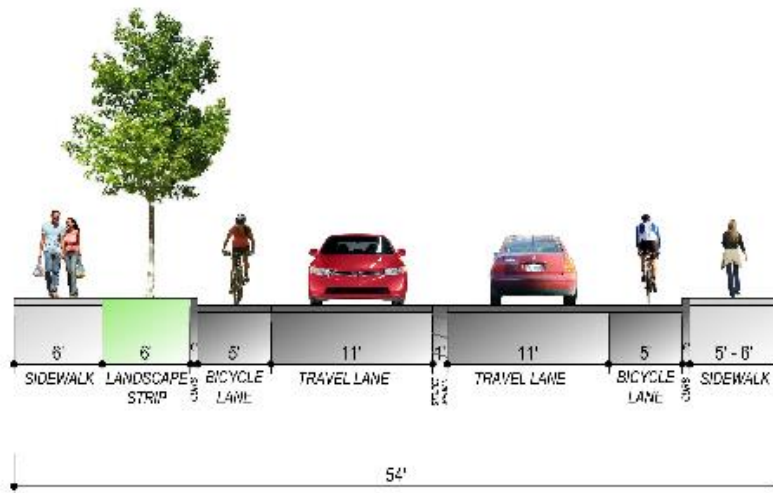
Charlottesville, VA





SECTION C - 9TH ST. BETWEEN MARKET ST. AND E. JEFFERSON ST.

Charlottesville, VA



SECTION D - EAST HIGH ST. BETWEEN 9 1/2 ST. AND CFA

Charlottesville, VA





