

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



Agenda Date:	May 1, 2017
Action Required:	None Required
Presenter:	Mike Stoneking, Chair, PLACE Design Task Force
Staff Contacts:	Carrie Rainey, City Planner, Neighborhood Development Services
Title:	2016 PLACE Annual Report

Background:

On March 5th, 2012, City Council created the Placemaking, Livability, and Community Engagement (PLACE) Design Task Force to act as an advisory body to the Planning Commission and City Council charged with the following:

1. Advising on the urban design aspects of development projects on publicly owned or financed land and developing design criteria for such projects.
2. Reviewing the design of city capital projects and changes to existing public facilities.
3. Reviewing the proposals for public art.
4. Reviewing the status of landscape improvements and policies including tree cutting, maintenance and planting.
5. To develop best practices for urban design guidelines and their implementation.
6. Review of special projects as requested by City Council or the Planning Commission.
7. Identify the obstacles and recommend incentives for the redevelopment of our growth corridors.
8. Identify best practices for community engagement in planning and design and recommend processes.

The Task Force provides periodic memorandum to City Council to provide information on recent work of the Task Force as well as recommendations related to various City efforts. The Task Force provides an annual report summarizing the efforts of the Task Force as well as recommendations for City Council to consider.

Budgetary Impact:

Undetermined.

Attachment:

(1) 2016 PLACE Annual Report

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE PLACE DESIGN TASK FORCE

Annual Report to City Council
Winter 2017

Place, Livability, and Community Engagement



PLACE Executive Summary

2016 Actions and Accomplishments

(see details in the Annual Report)

8 Charges → 2016 Work ↓	#1 Urban design aspects of dev. projects	#2 Reviewing the design of capital projects	#3 Reviewing proposals for public art	#4 Reviewing landscape improvement	#5 Develop best practices for urban design	#6 Review of special projects	#7 Incentives for the redevelopment of corridors	#8 Best practices for comm. engagement
W. Main St.	X	X		X			X	X
Value Analysis	X							
Belmont Bridge		X						X
Downtown Mall		X		X				
Lighting Study		X						
Local arts			X					
BRC			X			X		
Green Infrastructure plan				X				
STW/ Code Audit				X	X			
Urban Design Metrics					X			
3D Modeling					X			X
SIA	X			X	X			X

PLACE requests for City Council action:

1. Endorse the use of 3D modeling as an information-sharing tool throughout the development of form-based code in the SIA and other city areas.
2. Endorse and provide funding for the development of a Cultural Landscape Report for the Downtown Mall.
3. Endorse the creation of and provide funding for a City Designer/Architect position.
4. Add new ex officio members to PLACE from the Charlottesville Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Human Rights Commission.

Task Force Members 2016-2017

Mike Stoneking (Architecture), Chair
Fred Wolf (Architecture), Vice Chair
Rachel Lloyd (Preservation), Secretary
Kate Bennis (Arts)
Clarence Green (Citizen at large)
Andrew Mondschein (Transportation)
Andres Pacheco (Architecture)
Chris Henry (Development)
Tim Mohr (Board of Architectural Review)
Kathy Galvin (City Council)
Scott Paisley (Bike/Ped Committee)
Paul Josey (Tree Commission)
Genevieve Keller (Planning Commission)
Claudette Grant (completed term in 2016)
Mark Watson (completed term in 2016)

Purpose and Charge

In the summer of 2012, City Council formed the PLACE Design Task Force to:

- Guide the community in making decisions about place making, livability, and community engagement.
- Act as an advisory body to the Planning Commission and City Council in areas pertaining to urban design and place making.

PLACE's research and review activities focus on the following charges:

1. Advising on the urban design aspects of development projects on publicly owned or financed land and developing design criteria for such projects.
2. Reviewing the design of city capital projects and changes to existing public facilities.
3. Reviewing the proposals for public art.
4. Reviewing the status of landscape improvements and policies including tree cutting, maintenance and planting.

5. To develop best practices for urban design guidelines and their implementation.
6. Review of special projects as requested by City Council or the Planning Commission.
7. Identify the obstacles and recommend incentives for the redevelopment of our growth corridors.
8. Identify best practices for community engagement in planning and design and recommend processes.

PLACE understands design to be a holistic method of problem-solving and believes that good urban design contributes to safe, welcoming, diverse, functional, attractive, environmentally sustainable, and economically vibrant spaces and systems that reflect the rich natural and historic context of our community.

Actions and Accomplishments

After the 2014-2015 program of study and engagement with a variety of urban design projects, PLACE recommended in its last annual report that the City consider the following options to achieve the charges listed above:

- Undertake a debrief of the City's typical design project processes through case studies of current local public infrastructure projects. The debrief would examine the City's current practices in community engagement, design sequencing, communication with consultants, and communication with the City's decision-making bodies such as Council in order to identify which processes conform to best management practices and which need improvement. *Result: PLACE has continued to review a variety of public projects and provides feedback to staff on potential improvements to the design process for public projects. PLACE members provided information on the Friendship Court Resident Engagement process, suggested new*

management opportunities for the Downtown Mall, suggested new coordination opportunities for the CIP process, recommended improved standards for the city Lighting Study, and recommended new design review sequencing for the Hillsdale Drive project and other small area plans.

- Identify a range of appropriate design assessment processes for public projects so that City Council has the tools it needs to evaluate which plans provide the greatest design value to Charlottesville for every dollar spent. An appropriate assessment tool may help the city identify the advantages of a specific design, how important the advantages of the design are, and if those advantages are worth their associated cost. The design assessment processes could be coordinated with the city's CIP process. *Result: PLACE presented new summary information to the city about specific tools for value management. Information about the tools is listed below.*
- Provide support for scoping and project definition for selected public infrastructure projects through generating or reviewing RFPs. PLACE would rely on City Council or staff to identify appropriate projects requiring assistance.
- Investigate policies for the city that create more opportunities for active neighborhood involvement in the design and planning process for their areas, coordinating through CIP, small-area planning, or other city programs. *Result: PLACE recommended that the city explore new techniques for communicating and measuring urban design changes in the city. This exploration resulted in a policy recommendation for 3D modeling and urban design metrics for new public infrastructure and redevelopment projects in the city. PLACE recommended that the city implement its "City Engine" software capabilities to support data collection and visualization for new urban changes throughout the city. PLACE believes the City*

Engine system will be an important dynamic tool for communicating design information to the public.

- Continue to provide design review for public projects selected by City Council or City staff. *Result: PLACE provided in-depth support for a variety of public projects through participation in steering committees and other commissions. Information about the specific projects is listed below.*

We meet as a group at City Hall on the second Thursday of the month from 12-2pm. PLACE members, NDS staff, other departmental staff, and members of the public and press usually attend the monthly meetings.

The narrative below documents the work undertaken by the task force in 2016. A concise description of our activities and accomplishments is organized according to the eight topics in our Purpose and Charge.

Advising on the urban design aspects of development projects on publicly owned or financed land and developing design criteria for such projects.

- *West Main Street.* PLACE identified the need for a new comprehensive streetscape and urban design for the West Main Street corridor in the Fall of 2013. West Main Street went through a robust and inclusive design process starting in March of 2014 with a West Main Steering Committee that met on 7 occasions over two years through early 2016 and included several PLACE representatives as well as West Main Street neighbors, business owners and other key stakeholders. In addition, PLACE reviewed the consultant's design progress and provided integral feedback at several benchmarks throughout the process. The preferred urban design concept was reviewed by the city attorney and approved by Council in March 2016.
- *Value Analysis Assessment.* PLACE made a presentation that identified opportunities

for enhancing the value of public projects using a system of management techniques that increase operational efficiency, performance, cultural values, environmental sustainability, as well as cost effectiveness (construction and long-term). The value analysis processes examined included value engineering, life-cycle costing, Choosing by Advantages, risk management models and sustainability indices.

Reviewing the design of city capital projects and changes to existing public facilities.

- *West Main Street.* PLACE members served on the West Main steering committee. The West Main corridor is a complex collection of utilities, vehicular traffic, bike-ped concerns, landscape, parking, business storefronts, and historic structures bordering the Fifeville and Star Hill neighborhoods. It spurred an independent Pilot Project Proposal with the intention of testing the design recommendations made as part of the West Main Streetscape via temporary installations or changes to bike lanes, road stripping, parking management, etc. to gauge their effectiveness. Engagement and participation of stakeholders in community meetings also led them to draft memos expressing both concern and support of the project. In the end, a preferred concept was identified and approved by Council in March 2016 that is now undergoing schematic design and more detailed development by the city's urban design consultant, Rhodeside & Harwell. The selected scheme not only successfully addressed utility upgrades, street trees and landscape, on-street parking revisions (with an understanding we need a comprehensive parking management strategy by the city) and improved access for bicycle and pedestrians as well as vehicular traffic - but it represents a well design solution that through creativity and

some compromise, addresses equitably of all of the various requirements and concerns expressed by the diverse stakeholder groups involved. The preferred urban design concept was reviewed by the city attorney and approved by Council in March 2016.

- *Belmont Bridge.* PLACE members serve on the steering committee for the Belmont Bridge project and participated in the consultant interview process early in 2016. PLACE members will continue to serve on the steering committee through the design process.
- *Downtown Mall.* PLACE has made recommendations for long-term management strategies for the downtown mall's historic designed landscape in concert with BAR and city staff. The recommendation is presented below.
- *Lighting Study.* PLACE members advocated for new design standards to meet national lighting guidelines within the downtown and university neighborhoods.

Reviewing the proposals for public art.

- PLACE continues to coordinate with local arts groups and provides feedback on specific initiatives such as the *Play The City*.
- PLACE, through its representation on the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials, and Public Spaces, provided guidance on the disposition of the Lee and Jackson memorials and other public artwork throughout the city.

Reviewing the status of landscape improvements and policies including tree cutting, maintenance and planting.

- PLACE recommended that the city undertake a green infrastructure plan in its first annual report and later participated in a green infrastructure workshop with the Tree Commission, Streets That Work advisory committee, City Council, and

Planning Commission. The workshop evaluated analytical tools for measuring ecological features and systems in the city.

To develop best practices for urban design guidelines and their implementation.

- *Streets That Work/Code Audit.* PLACE identified the need for a revision to the street design guidelines in concert with a code audit in the 2014 annual report. PLACE members served on the Streets That Work advisory committee and reviewed project documents and report findings. PLACE also attended a joint work session with City Council and Planning Commission in November 2016 to review the comprehensive plan status, codes and ordinances for the SIA, design standards, and the framework for a code audit.
- *Urban Design Metrics.* PLACE developed an Urban Design Metrics worksheet that calculates the improvements in public realm design, based on the City's comprehensive planning goals.
- *3D Modeling.* PLACE members formed a subcommittee that investigated options for "smart" 3D modeling of Charlottesville's urban form. After consultation with faculty at the University of Virginia and city staff, PLACE recommended that the city pursue further modeling of selected areas of the city using "City Engine," a GIS-based modeling platform. The modeling is underway through a contract with the University.
- *SIA.* PLACE identified a set of form-based code design principles to support the implementation of the SIA urban design.

Review of special projects as requested by City Council or the Planning Commission.

- PLACE had one representative on the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials, and Public Spaces, which met over several months in 2016. The commission hosted public meetings, gathered data on a variety

of strategies for memorializing multiple facets of Charlottesville's history, and produced a report, which is under review by city council.

Identify the obstacles and recommend incentives for the redevelopment of our growth corridors.

- PLACE supported design initiatives that foster smart, mixed use growth of the West Main corridor.
- *Smart growth.* PLACE members reviewed the Smart Growth America Report and suggested opportunities for implementing the recommendations.

Identify best practices for community engagement in planning and design and recommend processes.

PLACE has provided a forum for citizens interested in public realm design within their neighborhoods.

Suggestions for 2017

PLACE suggests that we pursue our stated charges through the following tasks:

- *Design Review for public projects.* PLACE will remain involved with efforts launched in the previous year with the intent to observe, record and offer evaluation of the implementation. PLACE will advise NDS, the Planning Commission and City Council on the progress of these projects and include recommendations for improvement as necessary. These may include: West Main Street, Street Design Manual, Lexington/High Design, Friendship Court, Emmet/Ivy design, and other Small Area Plans. PLACE welcomes additional design review for new projects in 2017.
- *Support the implementation of the 3D Modeling/Metrics.* PLACE can support the implementation of 3D modeling and

metrics as applied to the SIA and form-based code initiatives.

- *Cultural Landscape Report for the Downtown Mall.* A cultural landscape report documents and evaluates the character-defining features, materials, and qualities of a historically significant landscape, and provides recommendations for the preservation of the property that are consistent with the landscape's context, integrity, condition, and planned use. A CLR would result in a "treatment plan" for the Downtown Mall that is consistent with the design and planning goals outlined by PLACE, NDS, Parks and Rec, and the BAR, and that meet national standards for historic preservation. The intent of the CLR is to provide clear and consistent direction for the management and maintenance of this cultural landscape. The city may procure the services for a CLR through an agreement with a UVA program such as the Center for Cultural Landscapes.
- *Contribute to the Code Audit and development of a Form-Based Code.* As directed by City Council PLACE will work with NDS in their efforts to complete a code audit. PLACE will offer insight and evaluation to help identify both successful and unsuccessful aspects of the Zoning Ordinance and other codes related to the built environment, including lighting.
- *Place-making.* PLACE will develop stronger, more meaningful communications and engagement with NDS and other city departments managing public space within Charlottesville. PLACE will provide actionable place-making recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council. PLACE will also review City RFPs for public space improvements as appropriate. PLACE will continue to develop its role as an advisory body to NDS, the Planning Commission and City Council including supporting place-making initiatives and guidelines throughout the Comprehensive Planning process.

- *Support the development of a City Architect role.* PLACE can help define the job description for a City designer/architect, as appropriate.
- *New members.* PLACE recommends that council consider adding two new members to the task force in order to support improvements in public engagement and redevelopment: a member from Charlottesville Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Human Rights Commission.