

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



Agenda Date: December 16, 2013

Action Required: Adoption of Resolution

Presenter: James E. Tolbert, AICP, Director of NDS

Staff Contacts: James E. Tolbert, AICP, Director of NDS
Amanda Poncy, Bike & Pedestrian Coordinator

Title: **Transfer of Funds from Capital Improvement Program
Contingency for the Context Sensitive Street Design Funding
Appropriation - \$300,000.**

Background: In September Councilor Galvin presented the attached resolution titled Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach to Council under other business. After discussion the Council referred the resolution to the Planning Commission for comment. The Commission reviewed the resolution at their October meeting and recommended to Council that it be adopted. One of the work items the resolution suggests is the creation of new street design standards for the City. This is an idea supported by staff, the Planning Commission, the Tree Commission, the Bike/Pedestrian Committee, and the PLACE Design Task Force.

Discussion: The attached resolution outlines several important issues concerning street design in our community and quotes relevant Comprehensive Plan Goals.

- The 2012 Comprehensive Plan of the City of Charlottesville calls for the development of a comprehensive set of street design guidelines based on the City's Complete Streets Resolution and ITE's "Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach", as a way to ensure that transportation infrastructure investments support the making of an attractive, healthy, and safe, walkable and bike-able Charlottesville.
- The 2012 Comprehensive Plan of the City of Charlottesville also calls for: Streets

that promote connectivity and best practices in storm water management; expanding the City's overall tree canopy; a transportation system that facilitates greater transit use and promotes well-connected, safe, bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure; a built environment that attracts and supports the city's existing business community and growing "innovation" industry; and a review and update of the City's regulatory framework (inclusive of zoning, subdivision ordinance, Standards and Design Manual and district and entrance corridor guidelines) to ensure that it successfully and consistently implements the City's Comprehensive Plan.

- "Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach" acknowledges that challenges encountered on any given individual thoroughfare cannot be addressed in isolation of the city-wide network and that establishing a block network plan that enhances connectivity, anticipates impacts of development on traffic, seeks to minimize conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and distinguishes the function, development intensity, modal emphasis and other physical characteristics of individual segments of that network (based on the context) is essential to a well-functioning city-wide transportation system.
- "Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach" promotes a collaborative, multidisciplinary process that involves all stakeholders in planning and designing transportation facilities; and focuses on applying concepts and principles in the design of thoroughfares that emphasize walkable communities in order to facilitate the restoration of the multiple functions of urban streets.

The resolution goes further to discuss how to implement the resolution and move to achieve appropriate context sensitive street designs. A key element for implementation is the development of a set of context sensitive street standards. Due to the number of ongoing development projects and the desire to achieve an improved street system, staff has put together a draft scope of work for such the first phase of a project. The intent would be to use this first phase to develop the scope for the remaining work. The elements of that scope are as follows:

Introduction

This project is intended to begin the process to develop street design guidelines to implement Charlottesville's goal that every street built will be complete in terms of safely and comfortably accommodating all users and fostering a sense of place in the public realm. The scope includes coordinating with City staff and key stakeholders and

development of an outline for new complete streets guidelines. The scope also includes developing an accompanying memorandum that will analyze the issues, costs and tradeoffs (if any) of adopting complete streets guidelines and as well as an action plan for moving the process forward to develop finalized guidelines.

Reference documents for this project include City of Charlottesville Standards, VDOT standards, VDRPT standards, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) guidelines, Boston Complete Streets Guide, ITE's Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfare: A Context Sensitive Approach, and other guidelines, standards and specifications as appropriate.

The following tasks describe the scope of work for this project.

Task 1 – Kickoff and Project Management

The Team will prepare for, participate in, and document a kickoff meeting with the City and other appropriate agency officials to review the scope and schedule for the project as well as clearly identify the project expectations. The Team will prepare a draft project schedule for review and discussion at the kick-off meeting. The Team will also conduct ongoing coordination with the City and other agencies as needed, and will prepare monthly invoices and progress reports. Each report will include task accomplishments, status of deliverables and expected upcoming activities.

Deliverables:

- Project Schedule
- Kickoff meeting minutes

Task 2 – Existing Document Review/ Field Assessment

The Team will first gather and review available data such as GIS and existing planning documents and policies. A desktop assessment will be conducted to determine preliminary street types. This assessment will pay particular attention to street function, quantity of travel lanes, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, buffers, adjacent land-uses and parking conditions. Additional street components, such as bus routes, and right-of way widths, will be reviewed as well.

The Team will compare the existing street types to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), Multimodal System Guidelines to determine applicable

standards/guidelines to Charlottesville. The Team will complete a limited field reconnaissance of typical street types, and to gain a more thorough understanding of the context, and to determine areas which may require additional verification. The field review will be conducted using topography mapping, and aerial photography provided by the City of Charlottesville to record findings. The Team will draft a summary memorandum of existing conditions observed in the field reconnaissance.

Task 3 – Stakeholder Involvement Meeting/Workshop

The Team will facilitate a stakeholder meeting/ workshop to gather input on the results of the field review/ reconnaissance completed in Task 2, and to learn about specific concerns and observations, and to identify the potential elements of streets for consideration. The Team has extensive experience employing a host of stakeholder engagement strategies, and will work with the City to determine which will be most effective. The Team will meet with City staff to determine what opportunities should be further refined and elevated.

Deliverables:

- Summary of workshop outcomes

Meetings:

- Stakeholder Meeting/Workshop
- Review Meeting with the City of Charlottesville

Task 4 – Draft Outline and Technical Memorandum

Based on prior tasks, the Team will develop an annotated outline of the proposed guidelines. The Team will also develop an accompanying memorandum that will include:

- Overview of the document review, field analysis and discuss the potential use of VDRPT guidelines.
- Documentation of the client and stakeholder input.
- Analysis of other relevant issues, costs and trade-offs of adopting complete streets guidelines.
- Action plan for moving the process forward to develop finalized guidelines (potential future Phase).

The annotated outline and memorandum will be desktop published in In-Design, and will include photographs, and graphics as needed to convey concepts in an easy-to-understand manner. The draft annotated outline and memorandum will be reviewed by the City staff and revisions will be made based on their input.

Deliverables:

- Draft and revised Draft Annotated Outline and Technical Memorandum

Meetings:

- Review Meeting with the City of Charlottesville

Task 5 – Stakeholder Review Meetings (3)

The Team will present the annotated outline and memorandum to up to three stakeholder meetings to receive input and recommendations. The stakeholder group may consist of the following groups:

- Place Design Task Force
- Tree Commission
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee
- ADA Committee

Following the stakeholder meetings, the Team will meet with City staff to present the findings from the stakeholder meetings and determine the final revisions to the annotated outline and memorandum.

Deliverables:

- The Team will prepare meeting materials for up to three meetings
- Finalized Annotated Outline and Technical Memorandum

Meetings:

- Stakeholder Meetings (3)
- Review Meeting with the City of Charlottesville

The resolution goes further to suggest a steering committee to guide this work.

- The Charlottesville City Council, shall establish an advisory group (consisting of members from the Planning Commission, Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, Tree Commission and PLACE Design Task Force, and others) in the fall of 2013 to work with an inter-departmental team of City staff (consisting of the bike-pedestrian coordination, staff experienced and trained in urban design and landscape architecture or architecture, NDS, OED, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Fire and Police Departments) to develop a Comprehensive Multi-modal Plan as called for by the ITE-CSA Manual, in conjunction with overseeing a “policy and regulatory audit” (with the assistance of an outside consultant, as deemed necessary by the advisory group) of the City’s existing regulatory framework.

- Until such time as the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-modal Plan is complete and adopted by the Planning Commission and Council, this advisory group may be called upon from time to time to advise Council and Planning Commission on projects (inclusive of development submittals) and assist staff with providing guidance to applicants on matters concerning a project's impact on the safety, functioning, modal-orientation, attractiveness and comfort of city streets.

Citizen Engagement: While there has been no specific engagement on implementation this concept was an important part of the Comprehensive Plan development and the resolution was discussed at the October Planning Commission meeting.

Alignment with City Council Vision and Priorities: Approval of this this agenda item aligns closely with the City Council visions to be:

- A Smart Citizen Focused Government
- A Connected Community
- A Green City
- Economic Sustainability

Budgetary Impact: Based on conversations with firms that do this type of work, staff estimates that the guidelines can be done for approximately \$300,000. It is recommended that these funds come from the Capital Improvement Program Contingency Account.

Recommendation: Staff recommends two actions at this time. The first is adoption of the attached resolution titled “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach” as a recommended “Best Practice” for New and Existing Roadways within the City of Charlottesville.

The second action is the resolution transferring \$300,000 from the CIP contingency to a new account for Street Design Standards.

At a future date, if these actions are approved, staff will bring a resolution to establish the Steering Committee.

Alternatives: The alternative to these actions is to not pass the resolution or the appropriation.

Attachments:

RESOLUTION

Transfer of Funds from Capital Improvement Program Contingency for the
Context Sensitive Street Design Funding

\$300,000

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that the following is hereby transferred in the following manner:

Transfer From

\$300,000 Fund: 426 Funded Program: CP-080 G/L Account: 599999

Transfer To

\$300,000 Fund: 426 WBS: P-00800 G/L Account: 599999

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING “DESIGNING WALKABLE URBAN THOROUGHFARES: A CONTEXT SENSITIVE APPROACH” AS A RECOMMENDED “BEST PRACTICE” FOR NEW and EXISTING ROADWAYS WITHIN THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE.

WHEREAS, “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach” was published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) in 2010 to assist communities in improving mobility choices and community character through a commitment to creating and enhancing walkable communities and is the basis for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation’s (DRPT) “Multimodal System Design Guidelines” and was sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration, the Office of Sustainable Communities, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and,

WHEREAS, “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach” promotes a collaborative, multidisciplinary process that involves all stakeholders in planning and designing transportation facilities; and focuses on applying concepts and principles in the design of thoroughfares that emphasize walkable communities in order to facilitate the restoration of the multiple functions of urban streets; and

WHEREAS, “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach” acknowledges that challenges encountered on any given individual thoroughfare cannot be addressed in isolation of the city-wide network and that establishing a block network plan that enhances connectivity, anticipates impacts of development on traffic, seeks to minimize conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles and distinguishes the function, development intensity, modal emphasis and other physical characteristics of individual segments of that network (based on the context) is essential to a well-functioning city-wide transportation system; and

WHEREAS, *The 2012 Comprehensive Plan of the City of Charlottesville* calls for the development of a comprehensive set of street design guidelines based on the City’s Compete Streets Resolution and ITE’s “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach”, as a way to ensure that transportation infrastructure investments support the making of an attractive, healthy, and safe, walkable and bike-able Charlottesville, and

WHEREAS, *The 2012 Comprehensive Plan of the City of Charlottesville* also calls for: streets that promote connectivity and best practices in storm water management; expanding the city’s overall tree canopy; a transportation system that facilitates greater transit use and promotes well-connected, safe, bicycle- pedestrian infrastructure; a built environment that attracts and supports the City’s existing business community and growing “innovation” industry; and a review and update of the City’s regulatory framework (inclusive of zoning, subdivision ordinance, Standards and Design Manual and district and entrance corridor guidelines) to ensure that it successfully and consistently implements the City’s Comprehensive Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council finds that the “Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach” will further the goals of the Charlottesville Comprehensive Plan herein expressed and complement the City’s Storm water Utility Ordinance and Healthy Eating, Active Living and Complete Streets Resolutions (passed unanimously in 2013 and 2010 respectively);

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL:

That, the ITE Manual, "Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach" (herein referred to as the ITE-CSA Manual) is hereby adopted as a best practice by the City of Charlottesville on all new and existing roadway improvement projects (inclusive of alleys, lanes, streets, and boulevards for both new and redeveloped roadways and block networks) and is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL:

That the Charlottesville City Council, shall establish an advisory group (consisting of members from the Planning Commission, Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee, Tree Commission, and PLACE Design Task Force, and others) in the fall of 2013 to work with an inter-departmental team of City staff (consisting of the bike-pedestrian coordinator, staff experienced and trained in urban design and landscape architecture or architecture, NDS, OED, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Fire and Police Departments) to develop a Comprehensive Multi-modal Plan as called for by the ITE-CSA Manual, in conjunction with overseeing a "policy and regulatory audit" (with the assistance of an outside consultant, as deemed necessary by the advisory group) of the City's existing regulatory framework, and

That the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-modal Plan shall in turn incorporate the findings and recommendations of the "policy and regulatory audit" and the City's small area plans, and

That a set of City-wide street design standards, implementation strategies and an enhanced City-wide block network plan shall be developed as part of the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-modal Plan, and

That the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-Modal Plan (herein meant to include City-wide street design standards, implementation strategies and an enhanced block network plan,) shall prioritize projects and identify capital expenditures by project and be presented to the Planning Commission and Council for adoption after public hearings by the fall of 2014, and

That the advisory group (together with staff) shall oversee the implementation of the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-Modal Plan in coordination with implementing revisions to the City's regulatory framework as recommended by the "policy and regulatory audit" and adopted by the Planning Commission and Council, and

That the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-Modal Plan shall begin implementation by the spring of 2015 in coordination with the implementation of City-wide regulatory framework changes and its Comprehensive Stormwater/Green Infrastructure Plan, and,

That until such time as the City-wide Comprehensive Multi-modal Plan is complete and adopted by the Planning Commission and Council, this advisory group may be called upon from time to time to advise Council and Planning Commission on projects (inclusive of development submittals) and assist staff with providing guidance to applicants on matters concerning a project's impact on the safety, functioning, modal-orientation, attractiveness and comfort of city streets, prior to submittal.

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