

**City of Charlottesville  
Department of Neighborhood Development Services  
Staff Report**

**CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
JOINT PUBLIC HEARING**

**DATE OF HEARING: December 10, 2019  
RE: FONTAINE AVENUE STREETScape PROJECT**

**Project Manager: Kyle Kling  
Date of Staff Report: December 10, 2019**

**Action Required:** Pursuant to Virginia Code section 15.2-2232, the Planning Commission will review the proposed Fontaine Avenue Streetscape concept, located on Fontaine Avenue from the City limit to Jefferson Park Avenue in the City of Charlottesville, to determine if the general character, approximate location and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof.

**Background:**

Fontaine Avenue serves as a mixed use residential/commercial Gateway corridor into the City of Charlottesville, the University of Virginia, and the UVA Hospital. This Project includes a comprehensive revitalization and a corridor improvement program for Fontaine Avenue from the City Limit (near Stribling Avenue) to the intersection of Fontaine Avenue with Maury Avenue and Jefferson Park Avenue. The corridor has been selected to receive funding for improvements described herein through the VDOT Smartscale process. Key components in the scope of work for the project include:

- Enhanced gateway corridor into the City of Charlottesville
- Improved pedestrian access, including wider sidewalks
- Improved crosswalks at key intersections
- Improved bicycle facilities with the addition of bicycle lanes
- Incorporation of landscaping and street trees
- Implementation of green infrastructure for stormwater treatment
- Improved access to existing transit facilities
- Installation of energy efficient pedestrian lighting

City Staff established the scope and design parameters of this project as part of the Smartscale application that was submitted to VDOT and was awarded the funding based on the scope and

potential value that this project has for the corridor and the community. The scope and elements of the project were established by staff utilizing 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, and Streets That Work. With a firm grasp of background information, the project team has begun the concept design and the public involvement process to ensure agreement with the project's purpose and need during development of a conceptual design for the corridor.

### **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:

- PLACE Design Task Force
- Planning Commission

The City of Charlottesville and project design team have provided multiple opportunities for the public to provide input into the plan development process. These include:

- A project website
- An on-line survey
- Two Public Workshops
- Four Steering Committee Meetings
- Two meetings with the PLACE Design Task Force
- Planning Commission Work Session

Each of the above meetings have been open to the public and all information is recorded and can be found at [www.fountainstreetscape.com](http://www.fountainstreetscape.com), however a summary of each event is below:

### **Project Website:**

The Project website ([www.fountainstreetscape.com](http://www.fountainstreetscape.com)) contains information that has been presented to date as part of the process. Information presented includes:

- Project background
- Project schedule
- A “Public Events” page that provides the presentations from Public Open Houses, Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and PLACE, as well as feedback received
- A contact form
- A “resources” page with links to studies and guidelines

Between September 2018 and November 25, 2019, the project website has logged over 67,748-page views, and approximately 9,285 users.

## **Community Event 1: Public Open House, January 31, 2019**

The first Public Workshop was held on January 31<sup>st</sup> at the Virginia Department of Forestry from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM. The event was set up as an interactive workshop designed to provide information and gather input on the Fontaine Streetscape project. Presentation boards were set up around the room to display key project information, as well as options on various design elements for public input. A board enabled participants to identify areas of concern along the corridor, along with suggestions on improvements. A comment form was also distributed gathering information on how people use the corridor, their needs, and how to prioritize future conditions.

The comment form was available on the project website, [www.fontainestreetscape.com](http://www.fontainestreetscape.com), from January 31, 2019 to February 15, 2019 to enable people unable to make the meeting to participate. Mail in comments were also received by the City. The following feedback as summarized from the meeting:

### Problematic Existing Conditions:

- Want safe pedestrian connection at Piedmont/ Appletree/ Mimosa
- Add/ widen sidewalks is desired
- Site distances onto Fontaine are currently poor
- More green space/ trees and/ or maintain existing tree canopy
- Safety for bicycles is needed

### Current Conditions in the Neighborhood:

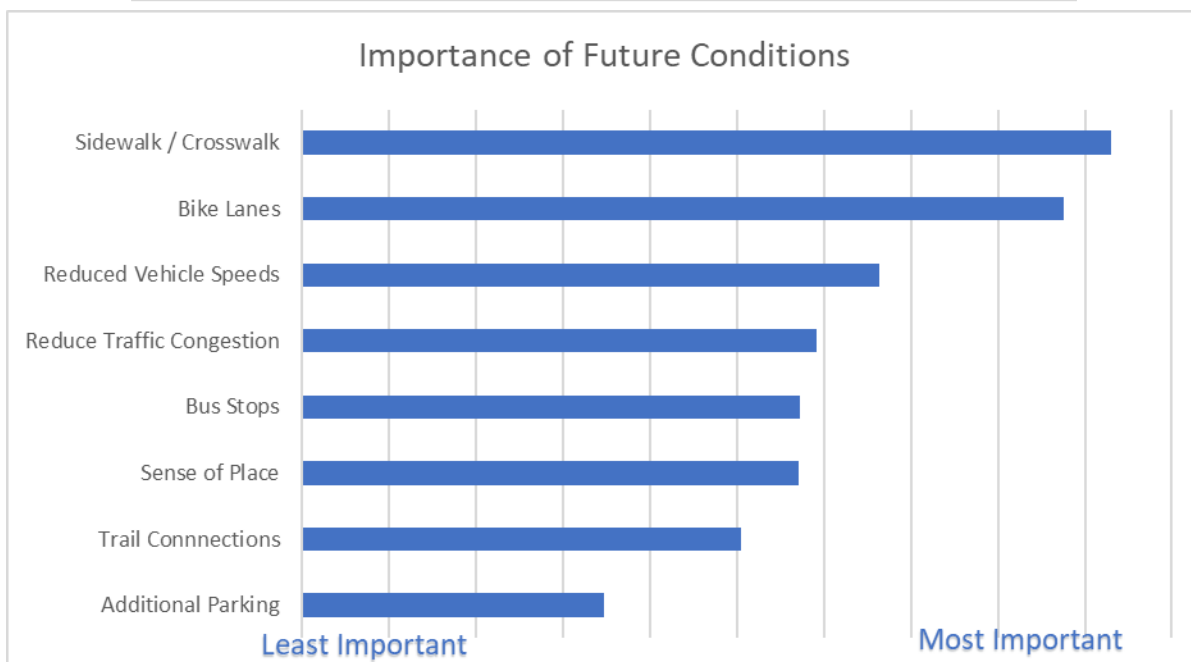
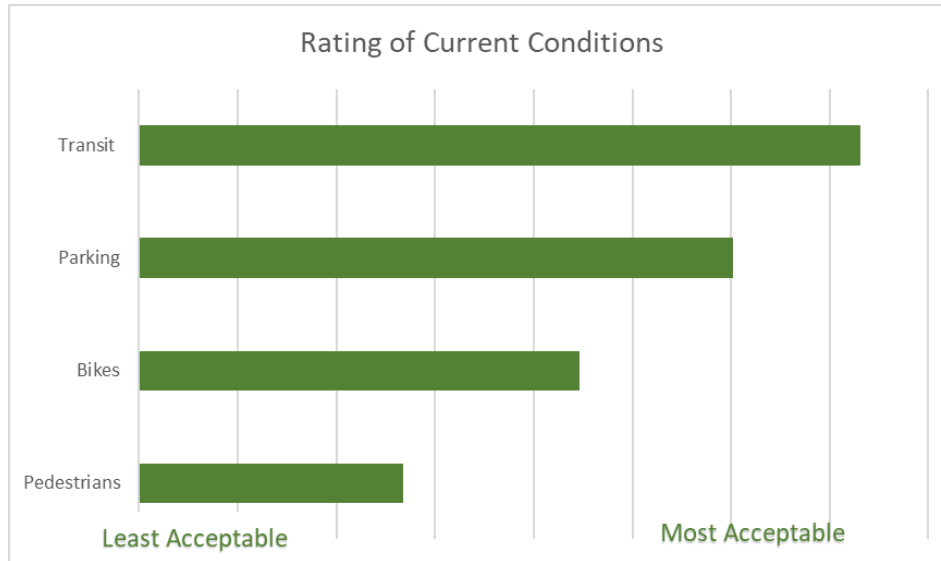
- Biking is dangerous
- On street parking is not a neighborhood benefit (Primarily used by UVA)
- Site distances onto the street

### Design Development Recommendations:

- Want safe pedestrian connection at Piedmont/ Appletree/ Mimosa
- Avoid reducing existing front lawns; Maintain existing Right-of-Way
- Include streetlighting
- Follow Streets that Work guidelines
- Include protected bike lanes
- Consider how to best utilize the paper alleys (parking or access)
- Preserve trees and include green infrastructure

### Additional Information to Include at Future Meetings:

- Coordinate with the County to include Fontaine Research Park and the Route 29 ramps
- Is UVA contributing to the solution?
- Will Environmental Assessments be completed?
- Production of sections, noting that multiple sections for the street might be required

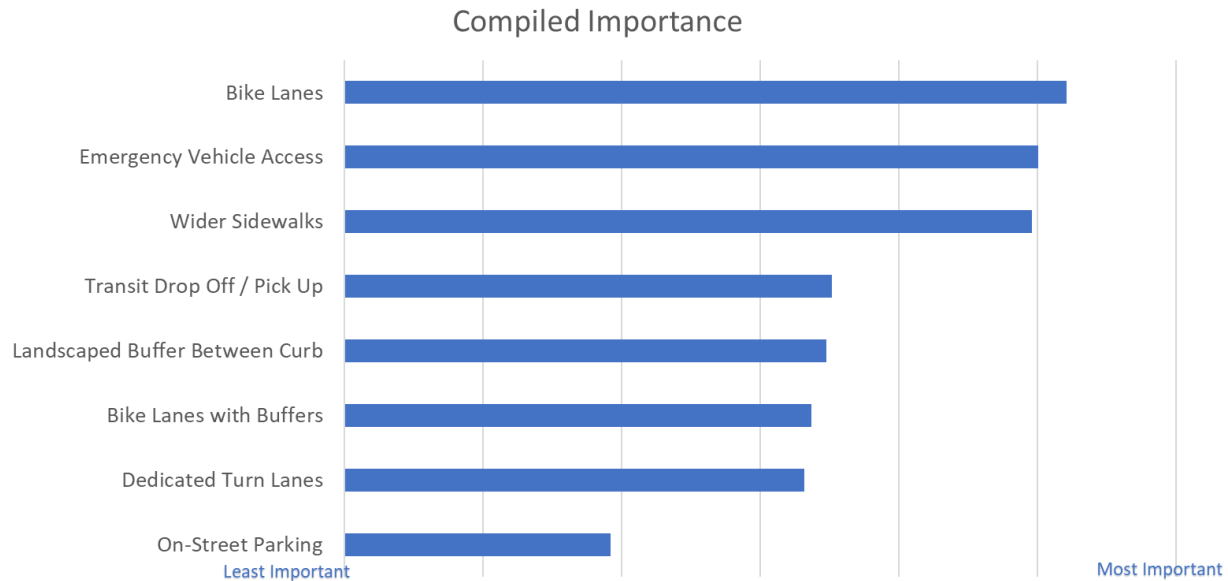


The full summary document from the meeting can be found on the project website.

**Community Event 2: Public Open House, April 18, 2019**

The project team held a Public Open House on April 18, 2019, at the Fire Station located on Fontaine Avenue from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. This meeting content reviewed the feedback from the first Public Open House, and presented initial cross sections for comment. The common feedback from the comment form and meeting feedback for this meeting was that users wanted to see trees and green infrastructure, as well as safer/wider sidewalks. Placing a priority on maintaining existing property features and making parking more efficient was also frequently mentioned.

The comment form was available between April 18, 2019 and May 3, 2019 and produced feedback demonstrating the following:



A full summary sheet of the feedback received can be found on the project website, [www.fontainestreetscape.com](http://www.fontainestreetscape.com).

### **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. Meetings with groups took place on the following dates:

- Steering Committee
  - November 15, 2018
  - February 28, 2019
  - March 25, 2019
  - September 17, 2019
- PLACE:
  - March 14, 2019
  - July 18, 2019
- Planning Commission (Work Session):
  - July 23, 2019

Meeting agendas and summaries can be found under the “Public Events” tab on the project website [www.fontainestreetscape.com](http://www.fontainestreetscape.com). Additionally, a Technical Committee was formed which is comprised of representatives from appropriate City departments. The Technical Committee held meetings on the project on February 25, 2019, and June 21, 2019. The Technical Committee

members validated information provided from the public, and ensured it was technical feasible in accordance with City standards.

### **Standard of Review**

Pursuant to Virginia Code section 15.2-2232, the Planning Commission will review the proposed Fontaine Avenue Streetscape concept, located on Fontaine Avenue between the City limit and Jefferson Park Avenue in the City of Charlottesville, to determine if the general character and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof. The Planning Commission shall communicate its findings to the Charlottesville City Council, with written reasons for its approval or disapproval.

### **Comprehensive Plan Alignment:**

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

- Economic Development
  - Goal 1 - Sense of Place
    - ▶ 1.1: Examine opportunities in the following areas: Downtown to Elliott between Avon and Ridge; Woolen Mills; West Main/Ridge McIntire; Cherry/Roosevelt Brown; Fontaine Neighborhood Commercial; Rose Hill; Preston Avenue; McIntire/Harris/Allied; River Road; Emmet Street North of the 250 bypass; High Street/Martha Jefferson; and Fifth Street Extended.
      - Develop a sense of place entering Charlottesville
  - Goal 2 - Mixed Use
    - ▶ 2.1: When considering changes to land use regulations, respect nearby residential areas.
      - Including residential feedback and ensuring character of neighborhood remains
    - ▶ 2.3: Enhance pedestrian connections between residences, commercial centers, public facilities, amenities and green spaces.
      - Enhances pedestrian connectivity throughout the corridor
  - Goal 4 - Regional Cooperation
    - ▶ 4.1: Coordinate with Albemarle County and other regional stakeholders to create a link between the City's pedestrian infrastructure and Monticello.
      - Albemarle County and UVA have been active on the Steering Committee
    - ▶ 4.3: Coordinate with the University of Virginia to take advantage of opportunities that arise from any potential future expansion of the University and in particular the University Health System.
      - UVA has been active on the Steering Committee
- Community Facilities
  - Goal 1 - Fire Department
    - ▶ 1.1: Maintain the response time standard of within 6 minutes for 80% of the

service calls in the City. Take measures to maintain this standard when increased traffic results from growth, tourism, special events and entertainment venues.

- Team has been working with the Fire Chief to ensure project does not reduce response time
- Goal 2 - Emergency Rescue Services
  - ▶ 2.2: Develop a strategy to address the issue of City-wide and County accessibility so that a quick response time can be maintained.
    - Team has been working with the Fire Chief to ensure project does not reduce response time
- Goal 5 – Water Infrastructure
  - ▶ 5.1: Maintain, repair and replace water lines where necessary.
    - Project will minimize impacts to waterlines and replace as necessary
- Goal 7 - Parks and Recreation (Use)
  - ▶ 9.5: Enhance multimodal access to parks.
    - Provides access to existing trails and bicycle facilities
- Goal 11 - Parks and Recreation (Trails)
  - ▶ 11.1: Fully Implement the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Plan that has been approved by City Council.
    - Provides access to existing trails and bicycle facilities
- Economic Sustainability
  - Goal 2 - Sustaining Business
    - ▶ Improve access to local businesses
- Environment
  - Goal 2 - Urban Landscape & Habitat Enhancement
    - ▶ 2.2: Expand and protect the overall tree canopy of the City and increase the canopy of neighborhoods in an effort to achieve American Forest canopy recommendations (urban: 25%, suburban: 50% and center business zones: 15%).
      - Adding canopy trees in landscape buffers to support the overall City tree canopy
  - Goal 4 - Water Resources Protection
    - ▶ 4.5: Reduce and/or eliminate stormwater runoff impacts from sites that lack adequate stormwater treatment by incentivizing reductions in overall imperviousness (i.e., effective imperviousness) and encouraging retrofits on developed properties to address stormwater management.
      - Implementation of green infrastructure practices for stormwater management
- Transportation
  - Goal 1 - Complete Streets
    - ▶ 1.2: Provide convenient and safe pedestrian connections within 1/4 miles of all commercial and employment centers, transit routes, schools and parks.
      - Pedestrian crossing methods are to be added at strategic placement throughout the corridor
    - ▶ 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.
    - Sidewalk widths will be increased, and street trees are to be placed within landscape buffers
  - ▶ 1.4: Explore and implement safe, convenient and visually attractive crossing alternatives to enable pedestrians and bicyclists to cross major thoroughfares.
    - Pedestrian crossing methods are to be added at strategic placement throughout the corridor
  - ▶ 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.
    - Bicycle lanes and wider sidewalks are anticipated, along with enhanced roadway crossings
  - ▶ 1.6: Consistently apply ADA standards to facility design and ensure that accessible curb ramps exist at all pedestrian crossings where conditions allow.
    - Consistent application of ADA standards
  - ▶ 1.9: Seek to expand and anticipate traffic calming where applicable throughout the City in collaboration with neighborhood residents and as part of the development process.
    - Placement of street trees and bicycle lanes are anticipated to aid in traffic calming throughout the corridor
- Goal 2 - Land Use & Community Design
  - ▶ 2.1: Provide convenient and safe bicycle and pedestrian connections between new and existing residential developments, employment areas and other activity centers to promote the option of walking and biking.
    - Project designed with new bicycle lanes and wider sidewalks, with enhanced roadway crossings
- Goal 7 – Regional Transportation
  - ▶ 7.1: Actively work with VDOT, TJPDC, Albemarle County and the University of Virginia to develop a regional transportation network surrounding the City.
    - Representatives from VDOT, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia Parking and Transportation are all active on the project Steering Committee
- Goal 9 - Infrastructure Funding
  - ▶ 9.3: Coordinate the funding and development of transportation facilities with regional transportation and land use plans and with planned public and private investments.
    - Project is fully funded through SmartScale (HB2)
- Historic Preservation & Urban Design
  - Goal 1 – Urban Design
    - ▶ 1.2: Promote Charlottesville’s diverse architectural and cultural heritage by recognizing, respecting, and enhancing the distinct characteristics of each neighborhood.
      - Recognizes and respects the distinct characteristics of the adjacent



neighborhoods

- ▶ 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.
  - Enhanced sidewalks and bicycle lanes promote connectivity from neighborhoods to businesses and the University of Virginia
- Goal 4 - Resource Inventory
  - ▶ 4.2: Continue to identify and survey additional significant individual properties located outside historic districts. In addition to historic buildings, consider significant buildings from the recent past (less than 50 years old), structures such as sculptures, landscapes such as public spaces and cemeteries, and archaeological sites.
    - Identified cultural and historic resources prior to the development of concepts
- Goal 7 - Comprehensive Approach
  - ▶ 7.4: Evaluate zoning map districts and amendments to the zoning map, including PUD's, for their consistency with preservation goals, and impacts on the historic character of City neighborhoods. Provide property owners with information on historic rehabilitations, financial incentives and context-sensitive design.
    - Consulted zoning maps to ensure compliance with goals and impacts
  - ▶ 7.8: Coordinate with the Public Works and Parks Departments regarding maintenance and construction that would affect historic features of the City's neighborhoods. Where possible, maintain and repair granite curbs, retaining walls, distinctive paving patterns and other features instead of replacing them.
    - Coordination underway with Public Works and Parks Departments
  - ▶ 7.11: Encourage retaining and replenishing shade trees, particularly large trees where possible, in all neighborhoods as we strive to make the City more walkable.
    - Shade trees planned for landscape buffers along central part of corridor
- Goal 8 - Entrance Corridors
  - ▶ 8.1: Emphasize placemaking elements and examine opportunities to create destinations.
    - Emphasizing placemaking to create a sense of place and character with landscaping
  - ▶ 8.4: Use street trees, landscaping, and pedestrian routes to provide shade, enclosure, and accessibility in streetscapes.
    - Shade trees planned for landscape buffers along central part of corridor
  - ▶ 8.7: When appropriate, coordinate the City's Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines with Albemarle County's Design Guidelines. Encourage continuity of land use, design, and pedestrian orientation between

contiguous corridors in the City and County.

- Guidelines referenced to promote continuity of land use, design, and pedestrian orientation

### **Suggested Motions for Amendment of Comprehensive Plan Text and Map**

1. I move that the proposed Fontaine Avenue Streetscape Project concept's, located on Fontaine Avenue between the City limit and Jefferson Park Avenue in the City of Charlottesville, general character, location and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted 2013 Comprehensive Plan or part thereof.

2. I move to deny that the proposed Fontaine Avenue Streetscape Project concept's, located on Fontaine Avenue between the City limit Hunt Drive and Jefferson Park Avenue in the City of Charlottesville, general character, location and extent of the proposed improvements are substantially in accord with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan or part thereof for the following reasons:

### **Attachments**

Resolution

**RESOLUTION  
OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDING THE FONTAINE AVENUE 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 Fontaine Avenue 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 10<sup>th</sup> day of December 2019.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, Charlottesville Planning Commission