

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



<b>Agenda Date:</b>	September 7, 2021
<b>Action Required:</b>	Vote on Resolution
<b>Staff Presenters:</b>	Timothy Motsch, Transportation Project Manager
<b>Staff Contacts:</b>	David Brown, Public Works Director Tony Edwards, Development Services Manager Timothy Motsch, Transportation Project Manager
<b>Title:</b>	Barracks Road/Emmet Street Smartscale Improvement Project – Resolution Approving Design Public Hearing

**Background:** The Design Public Hearing for the Barracks Road/Emmet Street Smartscale Improvement Project was held on Wednesday, July 7, 2021 at virtually by Zoom. The meeting was advertised using the following methods:

- 1) Daily Progress Advertisement – Sunday, June 6, Wednesday June 30.
- 2) Direct Mailing - 52 “Current Residents” + 12 “Impacted Owners”
- 3) Certified Mailing to Impacted Property Owners (as well as Invitation to Meet)
- 4) Emailed Citywide mailing list as well as Project mailing list
- 5) Updated Project Website’s Main Page
- 6) Variable Message Sign used on Project Corridor for one week before meeting
- 7) Emailed first project update report after meeting noting public comment deadline of July 23rd and link to posted meeting materials on website.

Seventy-five (75) persons attended the hearing. The project presentation consisted of a slideshow presentation with verbal descriptions depicting the project (PDF attached).

Project plans, detailed displays, environmental documents and other required project materials were made available on the project website.

The Public Hearing was from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The slideshow and referenced documents are included as electronic links to this memorandum (Attachment E). From approximately 6:30pm until 7:30pm public speakers shared comments that were captured by a court reporter (Attachment C). Six citizens spoke during the hearing.

Six comments requiring after-hearing responses were received at the hearing. Twenty-seven comments were received prior to the closing date of July 23<sup>rd</sup>. All public comments received between June 6 and July 23, 2021 have been included in a chart with project team responses, as well as a summary of all comment forms received (Attachment D). Comments have been

addressed by the project team and these responses will be posted to the project website, including the original comment forms that were submitted.

**Discussion:** After an extensive public involvement process, City Council approved a Preferred Conceptual Design for the Barracks Road/Emmet Street Smartscale Improvement Project on March 2, 2020 and authorized commencement of final design. As a result, the project team has refined the Preferred Conceptual Design in preparation of the Design Public Hearing. The hearing was held to solicit public comment on the major design features (bicycle and pedestrian facilities, roadway configuration, landscaping) as well as anticipated temporary and permanent impacts on adjacent property owners and the completed environmental document.

No comments were received regarding the environmental document which is not surprising given the existing built environment and that this project is proposing modifications to the existing streetscape. No additional environment impacts are expected with this project and the project team will be producing construction documents to ensure the contractor follows current requirements for proper environmental compliance and maintains proper site controls (ex. erosion and sediment protections).

As for major design features, the following themes emerged from the comments:

- 1) General and repeated support for the implementation of bike/pedestrian improvements.
- 2) Concerns with vehicle speeds and impact on pedestrian safety crossing Barracks Road.
- 3) Concerns with pedestrian safety in slip lanes at the Barracks/Emmet intersection.
- 4) Concerns with impact to holly trees at Buckingham Road.
- 5) Concerns with sharrow (shared lane) terminus at Meadowbrook Road.
- 6) Concerns with retaining wall appearance & height in certain areas.

The project team appreciates all of the comments offered by the public and has responded to each comment in Attachment D. Several comments complimented the public process, overall project and expressed the feeling that participants were heard during the process.

As a result of the comments received, the project team is suggesting the following changes:

1. Signalize the southbound right turn slip lane on Emmet St. (matching plan to signalize the northbound right turn slip lane).
2. Add an additional sharrow (shared lane) marking on the westbound approach to the Barracks/Emmet signal.
3. Minimize impacts to existing holly trees that exist at the Buckingham Road intersection.

**Alignment with City Council's Vision Areas and Strategic Plan:** Advancing Barracks Road/Emmet Street Smartscale Improvement Project 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, Beautiful Environment; 3.1 Engage in robust and context sensitive urban planning and implementation; 3.2 Provide reliable and high quality infrastructure and 3.3 Provide a variety of transportation and mobility options.

**Community Engagement:** This agenda item is approving the results of the latest public meeting held for Barracks Road/Emmet Street Smartscale Improvement Project. A Citizen Information Meeting will be held before construction to provide information on the Maintenance of Traffic plans, Phasing, Points of Contact and other useful information.

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, individual property owner meetings, meetings with Boards and Commissions, two (2) community events (Public Workshop and Open House) and two (2) steering committee meetings occurred between May 2019 and November 2019. Information presented and gathered at the meetings can be found at [www.barracksemmetimprovements.com](http://www.barracksemmetimprovements.com), however a summary of each event is below:

**Project Website:** The Project website (<http://barracksemmetimprovements.com/>) contains information that has been presented to date as part of the process. Information presented includes:

- A “home” and “about” page explaining the scope and benefits of the project
- A “project updates” page that provides links to each public meeting that has occurred, along with materials shared at these meetings
- A “contacts” page providing the public an opportunity to comment on the project

**Community Event 1: Public Workshop, October 2, 2019:** A Public Workshop was held on Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> at Walker Upper Elementary School from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. The event was set up as an interactive workshop designed to gather input on the project from City and consultant representatives. The event was organized with two (2) exhibit viewing areas, each displaying the same information. Each area contained three (3) intersection improvement options and four (4) Barracks Road bike/pedestrian improvement options for review and consideration by the public. The intersection improvement options featured varying degrees of roadway widening and impact to adjacent slopes/trees on the westbound approach to the intersection on Barracks Road. The bike/pedestrian options included two (2) options for separate in-road bike facilities and two (2) options for a shared use path design approach. Participants were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on each option in a SurveyMonkey online project survey, which opened immediately following the workshop and closed 2 weeks later. Attendees were also given the opportunity to take the same survey in writing at the meeting. Once the online survey period closed and written comments compiled, a summary of survey results and recommended improvements were reviewed with City staff and presented for consideration at the next steering committee meeting (#2). This presentation and summary of discussion around recommended improvements can be found on the project website.

**On-Line Project Survey:** The SurveyMonkey survey was active from October 2, 2019 to October 16, 2019 (2 weeks). A total of 90 respondents provided feedback on 10 questions. The goal of the survey was to obtain objective feedback on the most significant, and potentially controversial components of the project. The survey obtained quantifiable data from the general public on the following project elements:

- Respondent identification and interest in the project
- Priority Ranking of eight (8) corridor challenges the team should focus on solving
- Public vote on four (4) bike/pedestrian improvement options for implementation along Barracks Road
- Written feedback on three (3) intersection improvement options

- Public vote on whether access to Meadowbrook Road should be left open (full access) or limited to right-in/right-out by extending a raised median through the intersection
- Public vote on whether respondents would bike on Barracks Road if it were made safer.
- Opportunity to provide general written feedback on the project

Results can be found on the project website <http://barracksemmetimprovements.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. The Steering Committee is composed of:

- Navarre Bartz, Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Brian Menard, Tree Commission
- Lyle Solla-Yates, Planning Commission
- Andrew Mondschein, PLACE Design Task Force
- Mary Hughes, UVA Office of Architect
- Dan Butch, Albemarle County
- Thomas Funari, Barracks Road Shopping Center
- Tim Heaphy, Venable Neighborhood Association
- James Chang, The Meadows, Neighborhood Association
- Holly Mason, Venables Neighborhood Association
- Clara Belle Wheeler, Meadowbrook Shopping Center
- Nancy Summers, Meadowbrook Hills/Rugby Neighborhood Association

The process also involved coordination with the following City Council appointed stakeholder groups:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Tree Commission
- Individual Property Owner Meetings: July 23, 2019
- PLACE Committee: November 14, 2019
- Planning Commission: December 10, 2019

Meeting agendas and summaries can be found under the “project updates” tab on the project website [www.barracksemmetimprovement.com](http://www.barracksemmetimprovement.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 July 25, 2019 and October 30, 2019. 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.

### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends approval of the major design features as shown at the Design Public Hearing with 3 changes as a result of public hearing comments:

1. Signalize the southbound right turn slip lane on Emmet St. (matching plan to signalize the northbound right turn slip lane).
2. Add an additional sharrow (shared lane) marking on the westbound approach to the Barracks/Emmet signal.
3. Minimize impacts to existing holly trees that exist at the Buckingham Road intersection.

**Alternatives:**

None.

**Attachments:**

- (A) Proposed Design Resolution Approving Major Design Features**
- (B) Design Public Hearing Presentation**
- (C) Design Public Hearing Transcript**
- (D) Design Public Hearing Comments**

**Attachment A**  
**RESOLUTION**  
**BARRACKS ROAD/EMMET STREET SMARTSCALE IMPROVEMENT**  
**PROJECT DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING APPROVAL**

**WHEREAS**, a Design Public Hearing was conducted virtually via ZOOM on July 7, 2021 by representatives of the City of Charlottesville and the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Transportation after due and proper notice for the purpose of considering the proposed design of the Barracks Road/Emmet Street Smartscale Improvement Project under State project number of 0029-104-336, C501, P101, R201 in the City of Charlottesville, at which hearing aerial photographs, drawings, environmental documentation and other pertinent information were made available for public inspection in accordance with state and federal requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, all persons and parties in attendance were afforded full opportunity to participate in said public hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, representatives of the City of Charlottesville were present and participated in said hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council had previously requested the Virginia Department of Transportation to program this project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council fully deliberated and considered all such matters; now

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Charlottesville hereby approves the major design features of the proposed project as presented at the Public Hearing with the following changes:

1. Signalize the southbound right turn slip lane on Emmet St. (matching plan to signalize the northbound right turn slip lane).
2. Add an additional sharrow (shared lane) marking on the westbound approach to the Barracks/Emmet signal.
3. Minimize impacts to existing holly trees that exist at the Buckingham Road intersection.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Charlottesville will acquire and/or furnish all right-of-way necessary for this project and certify the same to the Virginia Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration at the appropriate time.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute, on behalf of the City of Charlottesville, all necessary agreements required in conjunction with acquiring such rights of way, as well as all other associated standard agreements for construction activities.