

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



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| Agenda Date: | September 19, 2022 |
| Action Required: | Granting of air rights to UVA for a pedestrian bridge over Emmet Street. |
| Presenter: | James Freas, Director, Neighborhood Development Services |
| Staff Contacts: | Lisa Robertson, City Attorney |
| Title: | UVA Emmet Street Air Rights Conveyance Request |

Background

The University of Virginia is currently constructing a new building on Emmet Street referred to as the Contemplative Commons project. One component of this project is a proposed pedestrian bridge that would cross Emmet street from this new building to the plaza area next to the UVA bookstore and Newcomb Hall as shown in the illustration below. The proposed pedestrian bridge would replace the existing pedestrian bridge to the south of this location, which is not ADA accessible and has significant maintenance needs.



Discussion

City staff have reviewed the plans for this bridge and found that the proposed design readily meets the requirements for road clearance (16' minimum) and the City's primary concern of keeping the bridge abutments out of the right-of-way.

Further permit applications for curb cuts, street closure and similar construction period activity will need to be reviewed before work can commence. UVA is planning to construct the bridge this winter. The bridge will provide 23'4" of clearance and be 31' tall as shown on the submitted plans prepared by VMDO Architects and sealed August 26, 2022.

Staff's consideration of this request was supported by the resolution of an obstacle that had been holding up advancement of the Emmet Street streetscape project. Property acquisition costs, primarily those for University owned land along Emmet near the Ivy Road intersection, had placed that project well over budget. Given the University's strong interest in the completion of that project, they have agreed to providing the necessary easement at no cost so that the project can move forward in conjunction with their development in the Ivy corridor.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

The project supports City Council's vision for a "Green City" and a "Connected Community". It contributes to Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, to be a healthy and safe city.

The proposed pedestrian bridge also supports the vision and goals of the Transportation Chapter of the **2021 Comprehensive Plan**, which calls for a connected and well-maintained system of pedestrian ways and for ensuring that everyone is able to make use of our pedestrian infrastructure through accessible, ADA consistent, design.

Community Engagement

Conveyance of the requested air rights requires that City Council conduct a public hearing.

Budgetary Impact

No budgetary impact from this action.

Recommendation

Staff recommends granting the requested conveyance of air rights for a new pedestrian bridge over Emmet Street.

Alternatives

Council could decline to grant the air rights for a new pedestrian bridge. This action would force the University to redesign aspects of the "Contemplative Commons" project and retain the existing pedestrian bridge with the deficiencies identified above.

Attachments

ORDINANCE CONVEYING AIR SPACE OVER EMMET STREET TO THE RECTOR AND VISITORS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA