MEETING NOTES

To: Jeanette Janiczek
City of Charlottesville

From: Sal Musarra
Kimley-Horn

Date/Time: March 29, 2017 / 6:00-8:00

Subject: Belmont Bridge Replacement Project (VDOT Project #0020-104-101 / UPC #75878)
Steering Committee Meeting #2

Attendees

Amy Gardner	Belmont Neighborhood
John Harrison	Business Community
Patrick Healy	Ridge Street Neighborhood
Heather Danforth Hill	North Downtown Neighborhood
Tim Mohr	PLACE
John Santoski	Planning Commission
Lena Seville	CAT Advisory Board
Fred Wolf	PLACE
Tony Edwards	NDS - Development Services Manager
Alexander Ikefuna	NDS - Director of NDS
Jeanette Janiczek	NDS - UCI Program Manager
Carrie Rainey	NDS - Urban Designer
Martin Silman	NDS - City Engineer
Keith Aimone	Kimley-Horn
Brian McPeters	Kimley-Horn
Sal Musarra	Kimley-Horn
Don Paine	KGP
Stephen Stansbery	Kimley-Horn
Jonathan Whitehurst	Kimley-Horn

PURPOSE

Steering Committee Meeting #2 began the second step in the Belmont Bridge process. This step focuses on refining evaluation criteria to ensure the design alternatives align with project constraints, community values, and desired outcomes. The meeting focused on reviewing and discussing outcomes from the Mobility Summit (Community Event #1) and interim results of the online MetroQuest survey. The purpose of this meeting was to provide guidance to the project team in creating preliminary design concepts for further exploration at the April design charrette.

AGENDA

6:00 to 6:30 *Presentation*

Project Updates

- Process and Schedule

What we Heard

- Committee and Stakeholder Meetings (Feb. 21-23)
- Mobility Summit (March 11th)
- MetroQuest Survey (as of March 28th)

6:30 to 7:40 *Presentation*

Design Approaches

- Context, Constraints and Existing Conditions
- Alternative Design Approaches

7:40 to 7:45 *Presentation*

Next Steps

- MetroQuest Survey available through April 17th
- April 17th through 19th Design Charrette (City Space)

7:45 to 8:00 *Public Comment*

SUMMARY

This was the second meeting between the Steering Committee and the project team for the Belmont Bridge replacement project. Members of the Steering Committee, City staff, consultant team, and public were present for the discussion. Below is a brief description of the items discussed.

Summary of Discussion

Project Updates

Following brief introductions, Sal Musarra (Kimley-Horn) gave a background presentation that highlighted project updates, process and schedule, which included the following:

- Held 7 Committee/Small Stakeholder Group Meetings
- Initial discussions with Buckingham Branch Railroad
- Collected traffic data, which included information on vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians
- Completed the field survey, began Phase 1 geotechnical work, and began the environmental research
- Launched www.belmontbridge.org
- Hosted the Mobility Summit on March 11th at the Pavilion and collected more than 1,800 data points
- Launched online engagement with MetroQuest, which at the time of the meeting had more than 700 participants that provided 22,000+ data points
- The project schedule was reviewed. It was noted that we are in the process of using input from stakeholder and community meetings to begin concept development.

What We Heard

Through the public engagement process, the following common themes and key takeaways have been identified:

- The bridge design should be functional, and integrated to the community
- Connectivity needs to be improved, with an emphasis on the relationship between the downtown and neighborhoods
- The design focus should be on multimodal functionality and safety
- Develop a facility that is safe for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Include improved, safe street crossings, calm traffic to reduce travel speed
- Improve the intersections and approaches, including traffic functions, bike/pedestrian safety, and aesthetics
- Create a safer environment under the bridge
- Create opportunities for landscaping and public spaces
- Maintaining all modes of traffic during construction is a high priority

Following the presentation, a brief discussion occurred regarding the bullet points as noted in the slides. During the discussion, members of the committee expressed that the talking points/what we heard is consistent with feedback that they have received. Following the discussion, the results of the information gathered was presented to the committee, including the mobility summit and MetroQuest survey.

Design Approaches

The project constraints as presented include vertical constraints, budget, and intersection configurations. During the previously completed process, it was determined that an underpass or an at-grade crossing are not

feasible. Additionally, those options do not meet the criteria established by City Council for the bridge. To help with the process, elements of a bridge and bridge terminology were presented. This information is also available on BelmontBridge.org.

The presentation focused on two key aspects of the bridge—it's width and its length.

WIDTH: It was clearly stated that maintaining two travel lanes and pedestrian access over the bridge during construction was a high priority. To accomplish this, the bridge will require 30' in width during construction. Construction would occur in two phases, with traffic shifting from one side to the other after the initial 30' section was completed. As a result, members of the committee agreed that the ultimate bridge solution at a minimum should be 60' in width. The minimum 60' width also is consistent with the Council approved program. Preliminary options for a typical cross section were presented, and these cross sections will be further evaluated at the upcoming charrette.

LENGTH: Three options were presented for the length of the bridge:

- Option 1: Short Length
  - Approximately 240' in length
  - Likely three spans
  - Most cost-effective option
  - Parking below the bridge would be eliminated, however, this option would not preclude the parking being re-located somewhere adjacent
- Option 2: Medium Length
  - Approximately 300' in length
  - Likely two spans
  - Increase in structure cost from the short option
  - A significant elevation change in the bridge would be necessary to maintain minimum clearances
  - There is a potential for some parking to remain below the bridge, however, this option would not preclude the parking being re-located somewhere adjacent
- Option 3: Long Length
  - Approximately 420' in length
  - Likely 4 spans
  - Significant increase in structure cost
  - The proposed bridge would have the same impact/footprint as the existing bridge
  - Existing parking beneath the bridge would remain

Discussion

Following the presentation of the bridge length options, a discussion between committee members and project team. Highlights of the discussion include the following:

- There are approximately 53 parking spaces currently located within the parking area below and nearby the bridge that will be affected by the bridge length. Approximately 42 spaces are beneath the existing bridge, and approximately 11 are outside the bridge footprint.
- The parking lot is currently owned and maintained by the City, however, the railroad has an easement that includes 10 parking spaces that will need to be signed for railroad use only as part of this project. The agreement for the spaces was made many years ago, as part of a land transaction between the railroad and the City.
- If the parking is removed in this location, the ultimate design must address replacement of lost inventory to the extent possible within the project area.

- During construction for all three options, the parking area beneath and adjacent the bridge will not be able to be utilized for some of the construction timeline. Anticipated construction timeline is approximately 24 months.
- Because Option 1 shortens the bridge significantly compared to Option 2 or 3, the shorter bridge provides more opportunity for other amenities on the approaches because the bridge structure is shorter and/or less expensive.
- There are grading implications to each option, which will be explored at the April design charrette.
- There is an opportunity to relocate some of the parking in the areas adjacent to the bridge by using different strategies such as parallel and angled parking. These areas will be evaluated during the April design charrette.
- None of the options presented preclude or eliminate pedestrian access to and from the bridge structure.
- The three members from the public present expressed the importance of replacing as much free, public parking as possible – ideally with no spaces lost. This parking is used by employees of Downtown Mall businesses (including City Hall employees) and keeps cars from parking within adjacent neighborhoods. Other public and private projects will soon reduce the number of unrestricted parking spaces within Downtown.

Committee Action

Following the discussion, the committee voted to proceed with Option 1 (Short Length) with the added stipulation that the design charrette explore all options to mitigate the loss of the existing 53 parking spaces. The design charrette will explore three alternatives based on the short span length option.

Next Steps

The community engagement process will include 12 total committee meetings (6 steering / 6 technical), 15 stakeholder meetings (3 meetings with 5 different stakeholder groups), and 3 community events. Additionally, an on-line survey is currently available.

Several upcoming events were featured:

- Online Survey: March 11th – April 16th
- Design Charrette: April 17th – 19th
- Website: www.belmontbridge.org (includes digital comment form)

Questions / Comments (from Committee & Public)

- Q: How many parking spaces can be accommodated with the shorter bridge design?
  A: This will be explored at the upcoming design charrette.
- Q: When will the traffic numbers be available?
  A; Traffic will be discussed as a focus group during the planned charrette.