



MEETING NOTES

To: Jeanette Janiczek
City of Charlottesville

From: Sal Musarra
Kimley-Horn

Date/Time: February 22, 2017 / 3:30-5:00

Subject: Belmont Bridge Replacement Project (VDOT Project #0020-104-101 / UPC #75878)
Board of Architectural Review

Attendees

Carl Schwarz	BAR/Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Tim Mohr	BAR/PLACE
Emma Earnst	BAR
Justin Sarafin	BAR
Melanie Miller	BAR
Jeanette Janiczek	NDS - UCI Program Manager
Tony Edwards	NDS - Development Services Manager
Alexander Ikefuna	NDS - Director of NDS
Keith Aimone	Kimley-Horn
Sal Musarra	Kimley-Horn
Don Paine	KGP
Stephen Stansbery	Kimley-Horn
Jonathan Whitehurst	Kimley-Horn

PURPOSE

At the first meeting of the PLACE Design Task Force participants discussed previous design efforts and learned more about their role in the current effort. The task force also learned about project constraints and discussed the importance of various design considerations.

A similar meeting process will occur with each of the five stakeholder groups.

AGENDA

3:30 to 4:00 *Presentation*

Introduction and Overview

- Our team/our approach
- Project process and schedule
- Role of the Steering Committee (and how others will be involved)
- Understanding project constraints

4:00 to 4:30 *Facilitated Activities*

Previous Design Processes

- What went well?
- What did not go well?
- What can we learn?

Design Considerations

Performance of the proposed bridge program endorsed by City Council design and relative importance of the various considerations.

4:30 to 4:40 *Presentation*

Next Steps

- MetroQuest Survey
- March 11th Mobility Fair

4:40 to 5:00 *Public Comment*

SUMMARY

This was the first in the series of meetings between the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) and the project team for the Belmont Bridge replacement project. Members of the BAR, City staff, consultant team, and public were present for the discussion. Below is a brief description of the items discussed.

Summary of Discussion

Introduction and Overview

Jeanette Janiczek, project manager for the City, read elements from the RFP to the group, which laid out the general expectations for the project. The RFP included details of the enhanced bridge concept as approved by City Council which is the starting point for the design effort. Following brief introductions, Sal Musarra (Kimley-Horn) gave a background presentation, which included the following:

- Target design timeline of 15 months
- Multiple public engagement meetings and stakeholder interaction for the first 6 months of the timeline includes
- A list of stakeholders including the Downtown Business Association, PLACE Design Task Force, BAR, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the Tree Commission. Members of the Planning Commission and the ADA Advisory Committee also were invited to attend one of the five small stakeholder groups
- In addition to the stakeholders, the City has formed a Steering Committee to guide the overall process and a Technical Committee, which is comprised of City staff from across many departments
- Meetings and discussions with the stakeholders as well as the public and Steering Committee will serve as a guide for the design process where the goal of the project team is to obtain informed decisions, rather than consensus. Every step will build upon the previous step of the process through the selection of the preferred concept
- Initial project constraints include vertical clearance over the railroad, clearance over Avon and Water Street, project budget, bridge piers and supports, and intersection touch points
- A project website will be established and will be located at www.BelmontBridge.org. Meeting materials, notes, and notices will be posted to the website
- BAR members introduced themselves and noted the specific groups they represent

Facilitated Activities

Previous Design Processes

Three questions were asked to encourage discussion and inform the consultant team about the previous design process. Below are the three questions and typical responses to each.

- *What went well?*
 - Elevated the importance of creativity and innovation
 - Elevated the conversation about the bridge
 - The public was highly engaged
- *What did not go well?*
 - Most innovative ideas that were presented were not feasible
 - The constraints for the bridge and the surrounding area were not presented consistently
 - Throughout the process it seemed an “us vs. them” mentality was developed between the underpass and bridge concepts

- The design solution was too focused on the bridge causing too many urban design and connectivity issues
- *What can we learn?*
 - Understand what elements of the previous concepts can be used as a basis for advancing the project
 - Understand the cultural significance of Belmont Bridge as community connective tissue
 - Understand physical, time, and funding constraints and limitations to better frame the design process and get to an implementable solution
 - The design team should not be paralyzed by the past and should focus on the future

Design Considerations

With the understanding that project constraints (e.g., space, money, time, etc.) will require tradeoffs to occur, BAR members were asked to weigh in on design priorities. BAR members were given a worksheet that organized the design considerations endorsed by City Council into 10 categories:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| ● Community Gateway | ● Lighting | ● Spans, Piers, and |
| ● Improved Approaches | ● Multimodal Design | Abutments |
| ● Innovative Design | ● Scenic Viewsheds | ● Travel Speeds |
| ● Landscaping | | ● Other |

BAR members were asked to rate the importance of each category on a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high). Then, they were asked to rank the considerations 1 to 9 (or 10 if they added an additional category). Each BAR member was asked to discuss their top three selections. The most important categories identified by the committee were Multimodal Design, Urban and Innovative Design, and Other (community connection).

Next Steps

The community engagement process will include 12 total committee meetings (six steering/six technical), 15 stakeholder meetings (three meetings with five different stakeholder groups), and three community events. Additionally, an on-line survey will be available. The BAR was encouraged to bring up any pertinent information they may not already know. This includes other potential projects, existing studies, or anything that could potentially affect decisions regarding the bridge.

Several upcoming events were featured:

- Mobility Summit: Saturday, March 11th, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
- Online Survey: March 11th – April 16th
- Design Charrette: April 17th – 19th
- Website Launch: www.BelmontBridge.org (includes digital comment form)

Questions/Comments (from BAR)

- A simple summary of the previously completed process should be available to the public
- The previous process had limited involvement with BAR
- The new process should put engagement before engineering
- A greater emphasis should be placed on integrating multiple functions of the bridge in its community context
- Members preferred the bridge to act as a conduit for connection, rather than a destination or icon
- Viewsheds are important, however, focus on the views that will be experienced from the bridge, rather than looking at the bridge from other locations

- There should be a level of understanding about the dynamics of the pavilion. Elements should be considered for when an event is occurring and when there is no event
- It is currently difficult to get to the bridge from Water Street as a pedestrian
- One of the clear identities of Charlottesville is the Mall. The final bridge design should support that identity