



MEETING NOTES

To: Jeanette Janiczek
City of Charlottesville

From: Sal Musarra
Kimley-Horn

Date/Time: February 22, 2017 / 1:00-2:30

Subject: Belmont Bridge Replacement Project (VDOT Project #0020-104-101 / UPC #75878)
PLACE Design Task Force

Attendees

Rachel Lloyd	PLACE
Genevian Keller	PLACE/Planning Commission
Andrew Mondschein	PLACE
Mike Stoneking	PLACE
Clarence Green	PLACE
Chris Henry	PLACE
Jeanette Janiczek	NDS - UCI Program Manager
Tony Edwards	NDS - Development Services Manager
Alexander Ikefuna	NDS - Director of NDS
Brenda Kelley	City Manager's Office
Michael Barnes	Citizen
Keith Aimone	Kimley-Horn
Brian McPeters	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 meeting 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

1:00 to 1:30 *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

1:30 to 2:00 *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.

2:00 to 2:10 *Presentation*

Next Steps

- MetroQuest Survey
- March 11th Mobility Fair

2:10 to 2:30 *Public Comment*

SUMMARY

This was the first in the series of meetings between the PLACE Design Task Force and the project team for the Belmont Bridge replacement project. Members of the PLACE Design Task Force, 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, Board of Architectural Review, 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
- The Task Force 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?*
 - Identified the potential for an architectural component
 - Elevated the conversation about the bridge
 - Engaged public
- *What did not go well?*
 - How decisions were made—there was little transparency
 - The constraints for the bridge and the surrounding area were not presented consistently
 - The expectations and a framework for design were not clearly defined. Concepts such as “gateway” were not clearly defined throughout the process

- There were no clear expectations for impacts and outcomes presented
- *What can we learn?*
 - Understand the cultural significance of Belmont Bridge and its impact on design
 - Understand the relationship of the design of the bridge to the type of development that will ultimately surround it
 - Focus on the goal and urgency to develop a solution and advance the project toward construction

Design Considerations

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

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

Task Force 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 task force member was asked to discuss their top three selections. The most important categories identified by the committee were Multimodal Design, Landmark/Innovative Design (not a gateway), and Improved Approaches.

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 task force 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 Task Force)

- Transparency throughout the process is important.
- 10-foot-wide bike lane may be confusing to motorists, 8-foot is an acceptable width.
- Is there a current plan or projected plan to evaluate transportation throughout the City? *Currently, there is no plan for the railroad to leave this corridor.*
- A shared vocabulary that will evaluate and develop consistency throughout the process.
- What is the expectation for the life span of the proposed bridge? *Anywhere from 50-100 years.*
- During the conceptual design process, present the process on how the design team arrived at the solution.
- Don't discount the old designs if possible. If there is a reason they are no longer feasible, present and discuss why they are not feasible. Consider developing a white paper in response to previous concepts that were evaluated and deemed not feasible.

- The bridge should be designed as a connection, rather than a destination.
- A member expressed concern about keeping the old project information separate from the new information. Keeping a firewall between the two sources of information is going to be critical in establishing a new process.
- During construction, it will be important to maintain vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access.