

# Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan

## Scope of Work

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidelines and goals for developing a Small Area Plan that will encompass Cherry Avenue and the immediate areas.

### BACKGROUND:

The creation and implementation of small area plans are important elements of the City of Charlottesville's 2013 *Comprehensive Plan* as indicated in *Goal 1.1* of the *Land Use Section*. Charlottesville City Council initiated the first small area plan, with the Strategic Investment Area (SIA) that encompasses a large section to the south of downtown. The City is now working on a phased plan for developing the SIA. In the spring and summer of 2016, the City's Planning Commission held a series of work sessions and site visits, to evaluate potential locations for the next small area plan.

### Establishing Concept

Late in the summer of 2016, City Planning Commissioners designated the Cherry Avenue Corridor for the next small area planning initiative. The Commissioners cited several factors that influenced their decision to focus efforts on this area:

- Stresses on the neighborhood/corridor from commuter traffic,
- Large approved development under construction, anchoring the east and west ends of the corridor,
- Large numbers of vacant lots with potential for development along the corridor, and
- The ability to utilize the groundwork laid by the neighborhood in developing a Visioning document dated May 12, 2016.

In a process that ran parallel to the evaluation of proposed area plan sites, City staff provided the Planning Commission with an outline of common elements and traits for area plans. These are referenced from *Goal 1.2* of the *Land Use Section* of the 2013 *Comprehensive Plan*, where *Goal 1.2* reads to "Develop common elements of a Small Area Plan as well as a planning process that is both consistent and can be molded to the unique character of each area." Although not intended to be an exhaustive list of common elements and traits, as each study area will have unique characteristics and challenges, this language provides guidance for addressing different aspects of future small area plans.

### Existing Zoning Laws

The Transition Zone/Cherry Avenue Corridor zoning was created through a collaborative community process in 1999. Since that time, changes in the neighborhood and the economy have led to the understanding that these code sections may no longer be appropriate for this area.

### Supporting Documents and Codes

The process for this effort will follow:

- The outline for Small Area Planning, referenced above,
- The state enabling legislation Code 15.2-2223, -223.1, 2232,
- A May 2016 Cherry Avenue Corridor Community Visioning document, and
- A Small Area Plan Narrative/Development Map from the Land Use Chapter of the 2013 *Comprehensive Plan*.

## Staffing by Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

In spring of 2017, the City's Neighborhood Development Services (NDS) department approached the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), asking if there was capacity to manage and staff this effort. TJPDC staff confirmed that its office had the capacity and was willing to take on this process, in partnership with NDS. The TJPDC would staff the planning effort, as outlined in the following tasks and budget.

### Deliverables:

In meeting with the Fifeville neighborhood, community members identified three primary deliverables:

- A planning document that is SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
- Implementation of the plan, to bring real and tangible improvements to the community
- A planning process that brings the community together

As a fourth deliverable, the City seeks a framework that can be easily applied to future area plans throughout the City. In terms of scope, the TJPDC reworked tasks and budgets to meet this feedback. In the minds of the community members, the process may be as important as the document. There is a perceived need to bring together a divided community. The Fifeville neighborhood group believed that this process could help accomplish this objective. The following scope is designed to produce these four deliverables.

## SCOPE OF WORK:

The project scope will include the following key tasks. The TJPDC recommends a timeline from September 2017 to February 2019 – spanning approximately 16 months ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  years). The Fifeville neighborhood emphasized the need for immediate actions. In response, the scope aims to provide identified deliverables during the process.

### TASK 1: Project Management

*Budget: Included in Indirect Costs and Overhead*

*Timeline: Ongoing*

This grouping of tasks includes general management of the planning process, along with specifics that include:

- Refining the project scope and schedule:** The scope will be further defined in the early phases of the process. Especially with a relatively short timeline, staff will dedicate resources to maintaining the schedule and making any necessary adjustments to the scope.
- Developing a study area map:** In cooperation with the neighborhoods and City, the TJPDC will define a project area and develop an official project map.
- Conducting regular invoicing and progress reports:** The TJPDC will provide monthly invoices and progress reports to NDS, to help ensure accountability and frequent communication.
- Coordinating with NDS staff and other City officials:** The TJPDC will regularly coordinate and communicate with City staff, to gain guidance and local knowledge.

## TASK 2: Community Engagement

Budget: \$47,111

Timeline: Ongoing

The community engagement process is seen as a primary deliverable, as well as a task in the larger effort. With direction from the community, there are more resources and time dedicated to this task than any other. A community engagement plan, to be developed in the process, will provide a more detail schedule for public outreach. Subtasks include:

- a) **Developing a community engagement plan:** TJPDC staff will work with City staff and community members to develop a detailed schedule and list of strategies for community engagement.
- b) **Establishing and convening an Advisory Panel:** The TJPDC recommends that there be two advisory groups throughout this process. One would be more technical in nature, consisting of representatives from stakeholder groups in the area. This would include the University Architect, UVA Hospital, City Parks and Recreation, City Public Works, Charlottesville Area Transit and JAUNT, Neighborhood Development Services, the development and business community and multiple members from a Community Team, the second advisory group.
- c) **Establishing and convening a Community Team:** The second group, preliminarily named the *Community Team*, would consist of residents and businesses from the study area. These representatives will be assigned by the existing Fifeville neighborhood group. The Advisory Panel and Community Team will help guide the planning process and provide feedback on deliverables.
- d) **Holding two open community meetings:** In addition to the advisory groups, there will be two larger community meetings that engage the entire study area. These large community meetings will include presentations and facilitated discussion with community members.
- e) **Holding two open house meetings:** The TJPDC will hold two, all-day open house events at Tonsler Park. During this time, community members can walk in at any time, to: ask questions; provide feedback; and, raise concerns. This will allow for more one-on-one and face-to-face interaction with the community. The format will also allow people with diverse schedules to participate.
- f) **Conducting a Better Block event:** In the Spring of 2018, the TJPDC will facilitate a Better Block demonstration event that will include temporary features along Cherry Avenue, testing concepts from the planning process. The event will also include food, music and entertainment. It will serve to bring the community together and to provide a venue to collect additional feedback from the street.
- g) **Making a final community presentation:** Near the end of the process, the TJPDC will make a final presentation at a community event, where the community can provide final feedback and staff can identify final tweaks to the deliverables.
- h) **Conducting community mailings:** The TJPDC will work with the Advisory Panel and Community Team to develop mailings or fliers that will allow the community to provide written feedback.
- i) **Conducting a community survey:** The TJPDC will work with the Advisory Panel and Community Team to develop a survey that will help to collect additional community feedback.
- j) **Developing and maintaining a project website:** The TJPDC will develop and host a project website that will help to inform and provide greater public access to the process.

### Task 3: Existing Conditions

#### Who we are? What is in place now?

*Budget: \$23,661*

*Timeline: October – December 2017*

Identifying existing conditions is a critical step in any planning process. In order to identify action items and to develop a vision, there needs to be a clear understanding of the starting point. Subtasks include:

- a) **Developing a demographic snapshot:** The TJPDC will develop a detailed snapshot of the study area, in terms of demographic and income trends. This data will help identify where the community was, where it is and where it's going.
- b) **Identifying existing land uses:** Several staff members will conduct an inventory of existing land uses throughout the study area.
- c) **Conducting a housing inventory:** Staffers will also conduct a housing inventory, identifying the location, conditions and amount of housing in the study area. This will include a robust affordable housing component, as the Fifeville neighborhood group indicated that affordable housing should be a priority topic for the process.
- d) **Evaluating existing plans:** Staff will review existing plans and studies that may affect the study area. The process will determine what existing recommendations should still apply.
- e) **Identifying unique neighborhood characteristics:** What makes these are unique? What qualities does the community want to retain? Staff will find answers to these important questions.
- f) **Illustrating the existing zoning (building envelopes):** Zoning laws include setback regulations, defining the distance between a building from property lines. These laws also set height restrictions. The buildable area, known as the building envelope, illustrates the building mass under existing and proposed zoning. Staff will use visualization software to show how the study area could develop under existing laws. This will help the community determine whether there are any immediate threats from what is allowed.
- g) **Identify zoning mismatches:** Staff will conduct a thorough overview of the existing zoning code with NDS staff, to identify any additional conflicts with the community's vision.
- h) **Identify historic resources:** Staff will coordinate with the City's Historic Preservation Planner to identify historic resources. There will also be coordination with community members to identify unofficial resources that are important to existing residents.
- i) **Conducting a SWOT analysis:** This analysis will help the project team determine how to: build on community **S**trengths; improve upon community **W**eaknesses; take advantage of **O**pportunities and guard against **T**hreats.

### Task 4: Transportation Study

*Budget: \$18,318*

*MPO Match: \$10,000*

*Timeline: May – August 2018*

A basic transportation study will include existing conditions (as in Task 3) and visioning (as in Task 6) but is worth its own category, given that transportation was a primary justification for this planning effort. Since the TJPDC generally focuses on transportation, this task will be a natural fit for the project team. Subtasks include:

- a) **Identifying transportation needs and deficiencies:** The TJPDC will conduct a thorough inventory of the streets, transit services, sidewalks, bike lanes and any other transportation elements.
- b) **Conducting a macro transportation analysis:** The TJPDC will consider how the study area fits within the larger transportation network, city- and region-wide.
- c) **Mapping transportation facilities and needs:** Mapping will logically be an important part of the transportation analysis. Staff will create several maps of the various transportation elements.
- d) **Conducting a parking inventory and forecasts:** Staff will conduct a basic parking analysis for the study area. This will *not* be a full-scale parking study, as that could double the project budget. This subtask will include an inventory of all parking lots and a general assessment of on-street parking. Community comments will feed into this analysis.
- e) **Developing transportation recommendations:** With this analysis, staff will work with stakeholders to develop SMART recommendations. These will be projects, programs and other actions that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.
- f) **Developing project cost estimates:** In order to have SMART recommendations, there must be cost estimates, prioritized “to-do” lists, as well as an inventory of potential funding sources.

## Task 5: Economic Analysis

*Budget: \$8,087*

*Timeline: January – May 2018*

As with Task 4, economic issues appear to be of particular importance. This will be a basic analysis, considering existing conditions (as in Task 3) and visioning (as in Task 6) but is worth its own category. Subtasks include:

- a) **Conducting an existing business inventory:** The TJPDC will identify all existing businesses in the study area. The inventory will determine the conditions of those businesses, needs and how those businesses interact with the neighborhoods.
- b) **Assessing household economics:** This task will also include an assessment of household economics, identifying commuting patterns and household buying power. This will help identify what job needs exist in the neighborhoods.
- c) **Developing economic recommendations:** With this analysis, staff will work with stakeholders to develop SMART recommendations. Action items may include capital projects, programs and other recommendations.
- d) **Developing cost estimates:** In order to have SMART recommendations, there must be cost estimates, prioritized “to-do” lists, as well as an inventory of potential funding sources.

## TASK 6: Visioning

### Where do we want to go?

*Budget: \$15,885*

*Timeline: Ongoing*

With a strong understanding of existing conditions, along with identified community needs and the SWOT analysis, the project team will look to the future of the study area. This will help determine “where we want to go” as a unified neighborhood.

- a) **Developing a community vision statement:** A vision statement is needed for any effort to be successful. Staff will work closely with the community and stakeholder groups to develop a statement that will guide all objectives, recommendations and action items.
- b) **Drafting community goals and objectives:** Goals are general in nature but important for developing community objectives and action items. The goals will be founded on the vision statement and will guide development of Task 7.
- c) **Identifying transition zones:** The study area is not in a bubble. It is surrounded by other neighborhoods – some that are similar and others that are very different. The process will determine how residential and commercial areas will transition between each other and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- d) **Developing scenarios:** With input from the community meetings and stakeholder groups, staff will create potential development scenarios for the study area. This will include a base scenario that shows what would occur if no plan recommendations are delivered. Other scenarios, which will embody the community’s values and goals, will plot a preferred future, as set by the people of this area.
- e) **Designating specific density ranges:** As part of the scenario planning, this effort will identify existing residential and commercial densities. Staff will also draft options for appropriate densities for the future.
- f) **Calculating “developable acreage” within the study area:** Part of the scenario planning, staff will identify what areas are available for development or redevelopment.

## TASK 7: Actions and Implementation

### How and when we are going to get there?

*Budget: \$9,537*

*Timeline: July – November 2018*

At Fifeville’s June neighborhood meeting, community attendees emphasized the need for tangible and realistic outcomes from this effort. Even small or inexpensive improvements would help to build momentum for future improvements in the neighborhoods. The action items will set the “to-do” list for City officials and other stakeholders. The action items will be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Action items will address capital improvements, local laws and local programs. Subtasks include:

- a) **Identifying areas for private investment:** The plan will identify properties that are ideal and desired for reinvestment and identify specific strategies for (re)developing those areas.
- b) **Designating areas for public investment:** The plan will identify specific capital improvements to streets, parks and other publicly owned properties. Action items will include costs, timelines and responsibilities.
- c) **Recommending laws and programs:** The plan will identify recommendations for improving local land use laws, such as zoning, and programs for helping the community.
- d) **Identifying Other community improvements:** The community will identify any other actions that will meet the community vision and goals.

## **TASK 8: Cherry Avenue Small Area Plan Document**

*Budget: \$12,086*

*Timeline: September – December 2018*

Feedback from the phases of the community process and the summary reports from each of the above tasks will be integrated to develop the final document, including the specific action items. TJPDC staff, in coordination with the community and committees, will prepare the draft and final elements of the document. Staff will also develop a framework for future plans, with lessons learned and guidance for subsequent area plans. Subtasks include:

- a) **Drafting the document:** Staff will develop a concise and clear document that is written in a clear way, so that the community can easily refer to it. Drafts will likely go through multiple revisions, as the community, stakeholders and officials review the document.
- b) **Obtaining review and approval:** The TJPDC will have the Advisory Panel, Community Team and public review the document. After that review, staff will officially take the document to the Planning Commission for recommendations to City Council, which would ideally approve the plan.
- c) **Developing a framework:** The TJPDC will create a lesson learned document and develop a planning framework for future area planning efforts.