

Historic Preservation & Urban Design Chapter

Vision

Urban design and historic preservation contribute to the character and quality of neighborhoods, and to the aesthetic value of the entire community. As a result, the City of Charlottesville will be a well-designed community with neighborhoods, buildings and public spaces, including the Downtown Mall, that are human scaled, sustained, healthy, equitable and beautiful. Charlottesville will also seek to preserve its historic resources through education and collaboration to maintain the character of our neighborhoods' core historic fabric, our major routes of tourism and our public spaces.

Urban Design

Goal 1: Continue Charlottesville's history of architectural and design excellence by maintaining existing traditional design features while encouraging creative, context-sensitive, contemporary planning and design.

1.1: Emphasize the importance of public buildings, public spaces, and other public improvements as opportunities to promote a sense of place and a welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

1.2: Promote Charlottesville's diverse architectural and cultural heritage by recognizing, respecting, and enhancing the distinct characteristics of each neighborhood.

1.3: Facilitate development of nodes of density and vitality in the City's Mixed Use Corridors, and encourage vitality, pedestrian movement, and visual interest throughout the City.

1.4: Develop pedestrian-friendly environments in Charlottesville that connect neighborhoods to community facilities, to commercial areas and employment centers, and that connect neighborhoods to each other, to promote a healthier community.

1.5: Encourage community vitality and interaction through the incorporation of art in public spaces, neighborhoods, signage, and gateways.

1.6: Encourage the incorporation of meaningful public spaces, defined as being available to the general public, into urban design efforts.

1.7: Promote design excellence for public projects and installations at all scales.

Educational Programming

Goal 2: Educate property owners and potential property owners of historic resources about the significance of their properties.*

2.1: Continue to improve the City's ongoing education program to notify property owners and potential property owners that their property is situated in a Historic Preservation & Architectural Design Control (ADC) District, or Historic Conservation (CV) District, or is designated as an Individually Protected Property (IPP).

2.2: Continue to support the Charlottesville Historic Resources Committee's efforts to promote understanding and appreciation of local historic resources.

2.3: Continue to interpret historic resources to the community through markers, publications, events and other means. Strive to include the narratives and resources of underrepresented groups and areas significant in our local history. Coordinate this interpretation of historic resources with City improvement projects and other City initiatives.

2.4: Continue to support Preservation Piedmont and its partners in the Piedmont Area Preservation Alliance (PAPA) in efforts to coordinate communication among local, regional, and state preservation organizations.

2.5: Continue to support participation of staff and elected and appointed officials in regional and statewide preservation and design educational opportunities.

Incentives & Tools

Goal 3: Continue to identify and make available incentives to encourage historic preservation.

3.1: Continue to disseminate information to property owners regarding federal and state rehabilitation tax incentives, including Virginia's rehabilitation tax credit program.

3.2: Pursue National Register and Virginia Landmarks Register status for all future local historic districts.

3.3: Continue the Planning Commission's and Board of Architectural Review's annual awards that may include recognition of exceptional Entrance Corridor designs and the best examples of preservation and design in the community, especially in ADC Districts.

3.4: Provide technical assistance to property owners and/or provide referrals to other sources of information regarding architectural, historical or financial questions.

Resource Inventory

Goal 4: Systematically inventory and evaluate all historic resources in the City, and develop context narratives that provide the historical and architectural basis for evaluating their significance and integrity.

4.1: Work with neighborhoods to develop interest and participation in documentation of neighborhood buildings and history through architectural and historic surveys. Priorities are unsurveyed older neighborhoods, such as Rose Hill, 10th & Page, Little High, south Belmont, and portions of the Strategic Investment Area (SIA).

4.2: Continue to identify and survey additional significant, individual properties located outside historic districts. In addition to historic buildings, consider significant buildings from the recent past (less than 50 years old), structures such as sculptures, landscapes such as public spaces and cemeteries, and archaeological sites.

4.3: Encourage developers contemplating land-disturbing activities in areas likely to reveal knowledge about our past to undertake archaeological studies prior to development. Help identify financial incentives or funding sources for such studies.

4.4: Conduct additional survey work as needed to reevaluate existing ADC district boundaries.

4.5: Survey and evaluate all City-owned property, including schools and parks, for historic and design significance and integrity.

4.6: Systematically re-survey neighborhoods to update older survey information, beginning with Downtown and North Downtown areas.

4.7: Have conducted a Cultural Landscape Study and Management Plan for the Lawrence Halprin-designed Downtown Mall, to identify character-defining historic features, and have prepared a treatment plan to protect the historic character and features while supporting the Mall's current use.

Neighborhood Conservation

Goal 5: Protect and enhance the existing character, stability and scale of the City's older neighborhoods.*

5.1: Monitor the effectiveness of the Conservation District as an alternative, more flexible type of local historic district in designated neighborhoods. Monitoring techniques may include resident surveys and tracking demolition permits.

5.2: Recognize and respect cultural values and human resources, as well as built resources within the City's older neighborhoods.

5.3: Identify opportunities to increase intensity of use and flexibility of design in targeted areas to allow for more vibrancy and creative reuse of existing buildings.

5.4: Study the urban forms in historic neighborhoods and consider allowing similar design standards in new neighborhoods.

5.5: Provide property owners with information on historic rehabilitations, financial incentives, and context-sensitive design.

Resource Protection

Goal 6: Provide effective protection to the City of Charlottesville's historic resources.*

6.1: As requested by specific neighborhoods or when otherwise appropriate, consider additional neighborhoods or areas for designation as local historic districts (either Architectural Design Control Districts or Historic Conservation Districts) based on architectural and historic survey results.

6.2: On a regular basis, consider additional properties outside existing ADC Districts for designation as Individually Protected Properties, based on architectural and historic survey results.

6.3: Consider including resources from the more recent past (less than 50 years old) as Individually Protected Properties, especially those of significant architectural value and those that are becoming rare surviving examples of their type or period of construction.

6.4: Consider amending the existing ordinance to address protection of archaeological resources.

6.5: Designate Maplewood, Oakwood, and Daughters of Zion Cemeteries as ADC districts to ensure their protection and maintenance.

6.6: Continue to protect the environs of our World Heritage Site, the Lawn of the University of Virginia.

Comprehensive Approach

Goal 7: Coordinate the actions of government, the private sector, and nonprofit organizations to achieve preservation and urban design goals.

7.1: Facilitate periodic meetings with Board of Architectural Review (BAR), City Council, Entrance Corridor Review Board (ERB) and the PLACE (Placemaking, Livability, and Community Engagement) Design Task Force to ensure an excellent and consistent design vision for the City.

7.2: Consider the effects of decisions on historic resources by all public decision-making bodies. Priority areas are the Downtown Mall, Court Square, and the Corner.

7.3: Evaluate transportation decisions for their effects on historic districts, such as the Ridge Street District, and on Individually Protected Properties.

7.4: Evaluate current zoning map districts and amendments to the zoning map for their consistency with preservation goals, and impacts on the historic character of City neighborhoods, especially the zoning allowances for height.

7.5: Review the historic preservation plan, historic district ordinances, entrance corridor ordinance and design guidelines every five years to ensure that goals for preservation and compatible new construction are being addressed.

7.6: Encourage sustainable and green building designs as complementary goals to historic preservation. Support the implementation of solar photovoltaic systems in appropriate locations.

7.7: Coordinate with other City programs, such as affordable housing initiatives, to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources, including low income housing more than 50 years old.

7.8: Coordinate with the Public Works and Parks Departments regarding maintenance and construction that would affect historic features of the City's neighborhoods. Where possible, maintain and repair granite curbs, retaining walls, distinctive paving patterns and other features instead of replacing them.

7.9: Adopt a policy of applying the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Rehabilitation for all City-owned property more than 50 years old, and apply appropriate preservation technologies in all additions and alterations, while also pursuing sustainable and energy conservation goals.

7.10: Encourage retaining and replenishing shade trees, particularly large trees where possible, in all neighborhoods as we strive to make the City more walkable.

Entrance Corridors

Goal 8: Ensure quality of development in the City's designated entrance corridor overlay districts compatible with the City's historic, architectural, and cultural resources.

8.1: Emphasize placemaking elements and examine opportunities to create destinations.

8.2: Encourage site designs that consider building arrangements, uses, natural features, and landscaping that contribute to a sense of place and character that is unique to Charlottesville.

8.3: Ensure that new development, including franchise development, complements the City's character and respects those qualities that distinguish the City's built environment.

8.4: Use street trees, landscaping, and pedestrian routes to provide shade, enclosure and accessibility in streetscapes.

8.5: Protect and enhance access routes to our community's World Heritage Sites, the University of Virginia and Monticello, to recognize their significance as cultural and economic assets of the local heritage industry.

8.6: Consider the designation of additional streets, such as Ridge-McIntire and Cherry Avenue, as Entrance Corridor districts.

8.7: When appropriate, coordinate the City's Entrance Corridor Design Guidelines with Albemarle County's Design Guidelines. Encourage continuity of land use, design, and pedestrian orientation between contiguous corridors in the City and County.

Sustainable Reuse

Goal 9: Capture the embodied energy of existing buildings by encouraging the adaptive re-use and more efficient use of existing structures.

9.1: Develop an inventory of underutilized properties within City limits and develop strategies (such as rezoning, rehabilitation, and development incentives) that will move these properties back into productive uses that will support increased commercial or residential uses.

9.2: Collaborate with local organizations to steward the movement of underutilized properties back into productive and sustainable uses. As appropriate, create policy and financial incentives to encourage this process.

9.3: Encourage adaptive re-use of historic buildings as a strategy for historic preservation.

9.4: Support the rehabilitation of low income owner-occupied housing for energy efficiency and preservation of neighborhood character.