MEMORANDUM

To: Charlottesville City Council
From: PLACE Design Task Force
RE: 2015 Agenda
Date: November 13, 2014

The November PLACE meeting discussion focused on establishing a program of study and activity for 2015 in accordance with the guidance and support provided by council during the PLACE second annual report presentation in October.

Committee and Subcommittee Participation:
Walkable Watersheds steering committee
Mark Watson
Streets That Work/Code Audit Advisory Committee
Rachel Lloyd
Belmont Bridge Steering Committee
Tim Mohr, Mark Watson, Scott Paisley
West Main Steering Committee
Fred Wolf, Gennie Keller, Scott Paisley, Rachel Lloyd, Richard Price, Andrea Douglas
Small Area Planning Subcommittee (with planning commission)
Gennie Keller, Paul Josey
Small Projects Review Subcommittee
Rachel Lloyd, Paul Josey, Kathy Galvin
Others, as needed
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Public Project Reviews:
In keeping with PLACE’s charge and purpose, PLACE would maintain a program of design review for public projects in 2015. Recognizing that design is a holistic method of problem-solving that may be applied to the public realm at a variety of scales, PLACE would strive to promote design excellence in the service of the city and its citizens.

*PLACE would like to coordinate with NDS and other city departments to identify an appropriate list of public projects for review in 2015. The NDS project list, the CIP list, and the CDBG project list may suggest the high priority projects that require design review. The discussion during November’s meeting and the information in the PLACE Update Memo prepared by Jim Tolbert suggested that the Lexington/High Streetscape project and the Market Plaza project might be appropriate for design review. PLACE will coordinate with Jim Tolbert to finalize a list of design review projects.

Public Project Process Analysis:
PLACE’s purpose and charge also include the identification of best practices in urban design and community engagement. To this end, PLACE recommends that it continue its program of research in design and planning practice in order to inform new policies and guidelines for development by council, planning commission, and staff. PLACE has identified the following topics for research and evaluation:

• Building on local knowledge as a strong foundation for public projects. What are the best methods to enable citizens to share what they know about our community with the city’s consultants? How can the city use the research capacity at UVA to support public realm design initiatives in Charlottesville?
• Creating an effective RFP template for public projects. We should define a design problem effectively so that projects can solve a potentially complex range of problems. How do we create the best framework for a city project to achieve design excellence?
• Best value analysis tools for making design choices. How can we ensure that we achieve the highest design value for every dollar spent on public infrastructure?
• Community engagement strategies to achieve effective public inclusion. Public space is something we all share. How can the city become more proactive in working with citizens?
• Education about civic design. Citizens are empowered if they understand how design can work for them.
• Creating and using steering committees effectively to achieve multi-faceted solutions to design problems.

END