MEMORANDUM

To: Charlottesville City Council
From: PLACE Design Task Force
RE: Small Area planning, Project Review and Community Engagement
Date: December 11, 2014

The PLACE December meeting included several agenda topics, three of which were the Small Area Planning update, the project review list for 2015, and the NDS Community Engagement Plan review. PLACE offers the following notes from the discussion of those topics:

1. **Small Area Planning.** The two subcommittees on small area planning from PLACE and the Planning Commission will reconvene to discuss the prioritization of small area plans. The Hydraulic area has been the first priority because of the other related studies and design work now being undertaken in that part of the city. However, Jim Tolbert suggested that more than one small area plan could move forward at the same time. In particular, neighborhoods such as Woolen Mills that have been waiting for zoning and other regulatory updates could become the focus of a parallel track of small area planning in 2015.

2. **PLACE project review.** PLACE and NDS identified the following projects for design review during 2015, either through stakeholder committee participation, the PLACE Small Projects subcommittee review, or full PLACE committee review:
   a. West Main Street
   b. Code Audit
   c. Streets That Work
   d. SIA Code Changes and other Implementation
   e. Citizen Engagement Plan
   f. Small Area Plans
   g. Green Infrastructure Plan
   h. Various streetscape projects such as Elliott and Cherry, Garrett Street, Mall Crossings
   i. Martha Jefferson Streetscape
   j. Belmont Bridge
   k. Harris/McIntire roundabout

3. **NDS Community Engagement Plan.** PLACE agreed that the proposed CE plan was strong and addressed many participation/inclusion needs in the city. PLACE confirmed the need for the city to track and assess its improvement in community engagement over time. However, PLACE also identified a need for a complementary document outlining a process by which the community can engage the city more proactively to address a variety of planning issues. The discussion focused on the need for citizen education in planning and design processes (to empower community members to discuss design and planning issues that affect them); city website improvement (so community members can find the information they need and react to it in a timely way and have tools to influence planning processes); and early collaboration between citizens, the city and developers/designers for projects (for example, Albemarle county has a requirement that developers engage neighbors through a pre-application meeting for SUPs or zoning changes). PLACE recommends that any community/city engagement plan needs to be a living document, which is updated as new techniques and tools become available. PLACE would like to sponsor a “place-making summit” or other design education seminar in the city to support community involvement in urban design.

END